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Vol. 9 No. 3, 2003

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"I am tired. I have been Black all day!"

words by Preston L. Shumaker, MSW

When one of my best friends, shared this quote with me, I smiled and simply nodded my head. I understood. Thirty-six year old Kendrick is the sole African American gay male professional at his company in New York. He is articulate, sharp, and intelligent man on the meteoric rise to success. On a daily basis, Kendrick must deal with all the drama that comes with being a Black gay man in America. The common perception that African Americans are monolithic in thought and deed often is assumed within his business practice. Kendrick combats many ignorant and ridiculous stereotypes more times that he can count. He conducts himself in a respectable fashion refusing to let others break his stride. During these times, Kendrick simply remembers a quote from sister Oprah, who said so eloquently: "I was raised to believe that excellence is the best deterrent to racism or sexism. And that's how I operate my life."

However, dominant culture still provides repeated messages regarding what it means to be a "normal" person. However, what if a person of color's perspective is different than the dominant culture? White Americans can inflict their master status belief system upon others regarding "normalness" without apology because "their way is the best way." It has taken a lifetime to realize the fact that our way is not necessarily wrong. Black folks have always stridden to the beat of a different drummer.

Prolific scholar, Arturo Madrid, expressed his thoughts on the subject in an article entitled "Diversity and its Discontents." "The first half of my life, I spent downplaying the significance and consequence of otherness," he offered. As I read, he captured and validated my own life experiences. I, too, have felt the "otherness" struggle. As a means of assimilating into dominant culture, I tried to forget it. However, my White schoolmates always "reminded" me consistently that I was always too something: too dark, too black, too bold, too passionate, too dumb, too smart, too skinny, too full-lipped, too much hip, too quiet, too loud, too nappy-headed, too scared, too cowardly, too awkward, and too ethnic. As I tried to assimilate, I felt like my soul was being severed from my authentic Black self. Despite the social constructionist rhetoric that suggests that we are all equals, the essentialist American climate often treats diversity as inferior. My fellow class chums failed to see me because they believed that they were "better" than I was.

But many White children's lack of racial awareness exists primarily because they were taught never to view other minority groups as equals. Many families distanced themselves from "others" to suburban communities to "protect" their loved ones from "those improper influences." Interestingly, some white American heritage consists of "other" minority ancestry tucked neatly away from public knowledge.

In fact, some White Americans may believe that they have an innate "White identity". However, This White identity norm is socially constructed. Case in point, when dark Italians, Irish and Jewish ethnic groups immigrated to the United States, they too were thought of as "undesirable and abnormal others." Within one generation, each group relinquished their ethnicity to become assimilated members of the "White and privileged" dominant culture.

And still early in their children's lives, White parents continue to socialize them that they too must swallow the dominant American culture values. In most cases, their young children stumble upon this harsh truth when s/he "befriends" a person of color. However, the grim reality encounter is instilled when the child brings the minority person to their home. Researcher Thandeka revealed in her article, *The Cost of Whiteness*, that this experience is common. "The child is appropriately ridiculed by their parents and "learns how to disengage and shun others." Thus, the child conforms and disengages his/her feelings and how to dissociate themselves from other racial minorities," she revealed.

Furthermore, as most White children matured, they were conditioned that the world was their "oyster". Their White identity had been strengthened within their immediate family constellation but reinforced by educational, governmental, media, religious, and social institutions. Upon multi-systemic levels, White children were taught that they could excel and were intellectually astute, more desirable, born leaders. Other racial groups simply became marginalized, invisible and unworthy.

Consequently, Madrid continued in his article, "the second half [of my life] has seen me wrestling to un-

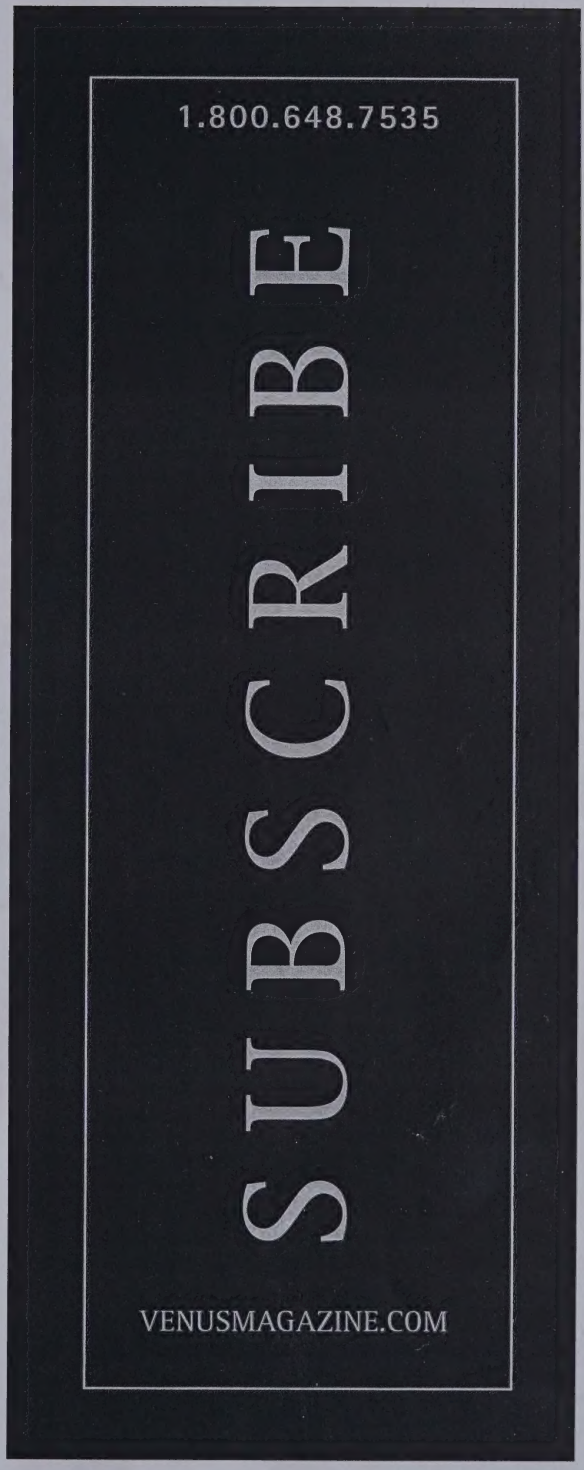
> "Their White identity had been strengthened within their immediate family constellation but reinforced by educational, governmental, media, religious, and social institutions."

derstand its complex and deeply ingrained realities; striving to fathom why otherness denies me a voice or visibility or validity in American society and its institutions." This passage burned a hole in my soul. Many Americans would believe that Kendrick had made it. He earns a great salary as well as occupational prestige. However, in his gut, Kendrick knows the truth: he is tolerated so long as he smiles and makes no waves. Thus, the quiet and do as you are told edict is unspoken but understood. As a professional, this ongoing validation and respect struggle is tiresome and mentally grueling. Thus, the American essentialist belief that Blacks are shiftless, lazy and mentally inferior to Whites remains in full effect.

When dominant culture inflict stereotypical ideals upon others ethnic/racial groups, their true freedom to reveal their true self is extinguished. Unfortunately, this form of oppression has been interwoven in the United States fabric and has become a non-conscious ideology. In order for our country to truly become a true land of the free, we must relinquish such negative ideologies, which is not easy because it means giving up one's power. If America admits that there are other belief systems just as valid, she could not have the privilege of being a powerhouse any longer. But then, America would become the home of the brave by truly embracing other minorities as equals.

Until that day, people of color must continue to fight for our respectable place at the power table of life. The struggle for equality and respect continues but we must refuse to wallop in the negative stereotypic lies. The question is, are we ready to claim our proper place? Judith Jamison, Artistic Director of the Alvin Ailey Dance company said it best: "we can go on talking about racism and who treated whom badly, but what are you going to do about it? Are you going to wallop in that or are you going to create your own agenda?" Ache.

Questions? Comments? Bring it on! Send to PrestonMSW@aol.com



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Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting SUSTIVA. They tend to go away after you have taken the medicine for a few weeks. A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. If you have these symptoms, you should contact your doctor immediately to discuss your therapy. There have been a few reports of suicide, but SUSTIVA has not been established as the cause. Mild to moderate rash is a common side effect of SUSTIVA. Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA because birth defects have been seen in animals given SUSTIVA. SUSTIVA should not be taken by patients who are also taking any of the following: Hismanal® (astemizole), Propulsid® (cisapride), Versed® (midazolam), Halcion® (triazolam), or ergot derivatives as there is the potential for serious and/or life-threatening side effects.* See Patient Information about SUSTIVA on the following pages.

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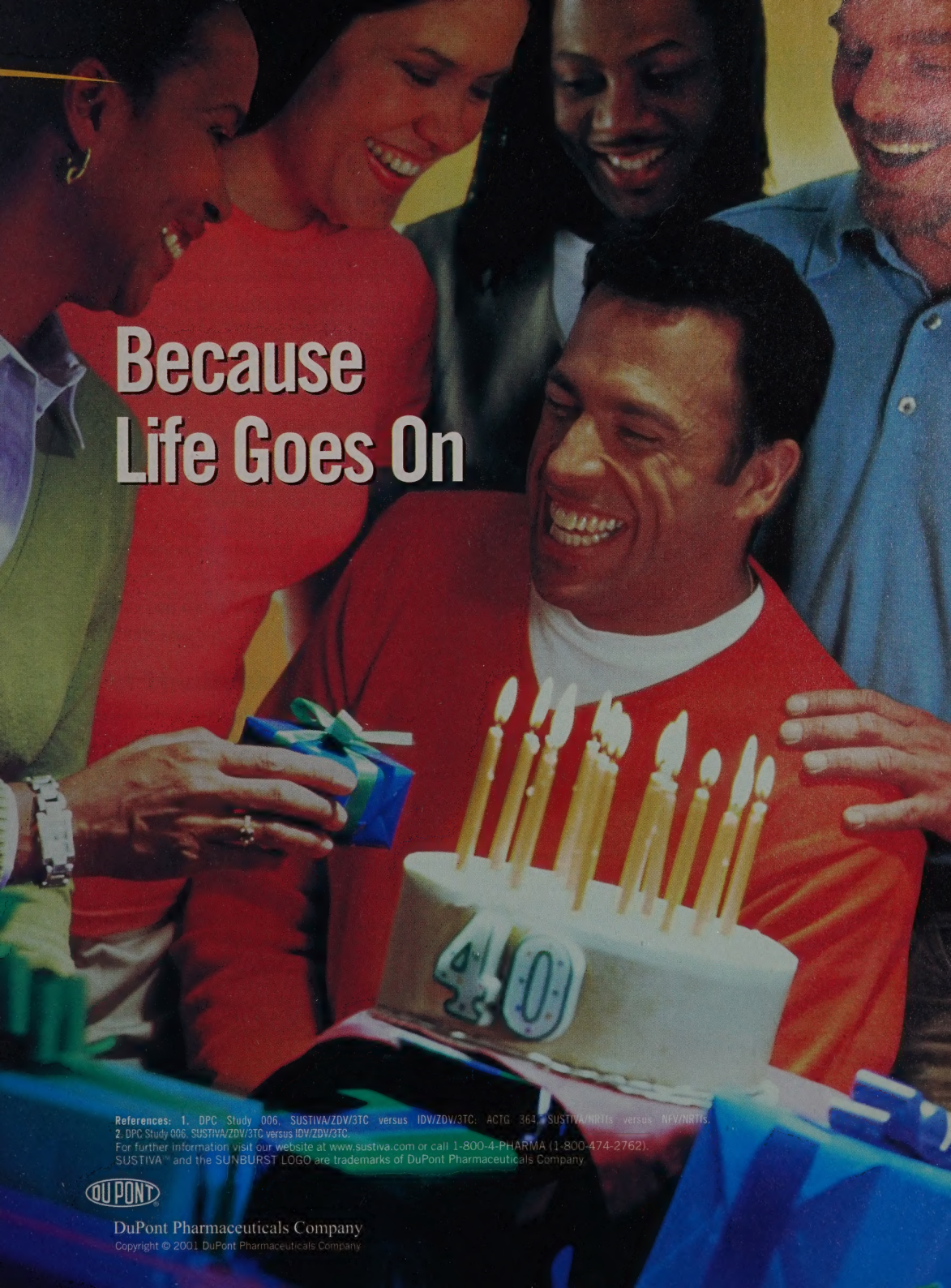

References: 1. DPC Study 006. SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC. ACTG 364. SUSTIVA/NRTIs versus NFV/NRTIs. 2. DPC Study 006. SUSTIVA/ZDV/3TC versus IDV/ZDV/3TC.

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Please read this information before you start taking SUSTIVA. Read it again each time you refill your prescription, in case there is any new information. Don't treat this leaflet as your only source of information about SUSTIVA. Always discuss SUSTIVA with your doctor when you start taking your medicine and at every visit. You should remain under a doctor's care when using SUSTIVA. You should not change or stop treatment without first talking to your doctor.

What is SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA is a medicine used to help treat HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). SUSTIVA is a type of HIV drug called a "non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitor" (NNRTI).

How does SUSTIVA work?
SUSTIVA works by lowering the amount of HIV in the blood (called "viral load"). SUSTIVA must be taken with other anti-HIV medicines. When taken with other anti-HIV medicines, SUSTIVA has been shown to reduce viral load and increase the number of CD4 cells (a type of immune cell in blood). SUSTIVA may not have these effects in every patient.

Does SUSTIVA cure HIV or AIDS?
SUSTIVA is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking SUSTIVA may still develop other infections associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important that you remain under the care of your doctor.

Does SUSTIVA reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?
SUSTIVA has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others. Continue to practice safe sex, and do not use or share dirty needles.

How should I take SUSTIVA?
- The dose of SUSTIVA for adults is 600 mg (three 200 mg capsules, taken together) once a day by mouth. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower (see **Can children take SUSTIVA?**).
- Take SUSTIVA at the same time each day. You should take SUSTIVA at bedtime during the first few weeks or if you have side effects, such as dizziness or trouble concentrating (see **What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?**).
- Swallow SUSTIVA with water, juice, milk, or soda. You may take SUSTIVA with or without meals; however, SUSTIVA should not be taken with a high fat meal.
- Do not miss a dose of SUSTIVA. If you forget to take SUSTIVA, take the missed dose right away. If you do miss a dose, do not double the next dose. Carry on with your regular dosing schedule. If you need help in planning the best times to take your medicine, ask your doctor or pharmacist.
- Take the exact amount of SUSTIVA your doctor prescribes. Never change the dose on your own. Do not stop this medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop.
- When your SUSTIVA supply starts to run low, get more from your doctor or pharmacy. This is very important because the amount of virus in your blood may increase if the medicine is stopped for even a short time. The virus may develop resistance to SUSTIVA and become harder to treat.

Can children take SUSTIVA?
Yes, children who are able to swallow capsules can take SUSTIVA. Rash may be a serious problem in some children. Tell your child's doctor right away if you notice rash or any other side effects while your child is taking SUSTIVA. The dose of SUSTIVA for children may be lower than the dose for adults. Capsules containing lower doses of SUSTIVA are available. Your child's doctor will determine the right dose based on your child's weight.

Who should not take SUSTIVA?
Do not take SUSTIVA if you are allergic to SUSTIVA or any of its ingredients.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?
Talk to your doctor right away if you:
- Are pregnant or want to become pregnant
- Are breast-feeding
- Have problems with your liver, or have had Hepatitis
- Start or change any medicine
- Have side effects while taking SUSTIVA
- Have a history of mental illness, substance or alcohol abuse

What are the possible side effects of SUSTIVA?
A small number of patients have had severe depression, strange thoughts, or angry behavior. Some patients have had thoughts of suicide and a few patients have actually committed suicide. These problems tend to occur more often in patients with a history of mental illness. You should contact your doctor immediately if you think you are having these symptoms, so your doctor can decide whether you should continue to take SUSTIVA.

Many patients have dizziness, trouble sleeping, drowsiness, trouble concentrating, and/or unusual dreams a few hours after starting treatment with SUSTIVA. These feelings may be less noticeable if you take SUSTIVA at bedtime. They also tend to go away after you've taken the medicine for a few weeks. If you have these side effects, such as dizziness, it does not mean that you will also have severe depression, strange thoughts or angry behavior. Tell your doctor promptly if any of these side effects continue or if they bother you. There is the possibility that these symptoms may be more severe if SUSTIVA is used with alcohol or mood altering (street) drugs. You should avoid driving or operating machinery if you are having these side effects.

One of the most common side effects is rash. These rashes usually go away without any change in treatment. In a small number of patients, rash may be serious. If you develop a rash, call your doctor promptly.

Other common side effects include tiredness, upset stomach, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, this is not a complete list of side effects reported with SUSTIVA when taken with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss a more complete list of side effects with you.

Please contact your doctor immediately before stopping SUSTIVA because of side effects. Tell your doctor or other healthcare provider if you notice any side effects while taking SUSTIVA.

What about birth control, pregnancy, or breast-feeding?
Women should not become pregnant while taking SUSTIVA. Birth defects have been seen in animals treated with SUSTIVA. It is not known whether this could happen in humans. You should use a condom or diaphragm in addition to other methods of birth control while taking SUSTIVA. Inform your doctor immediately if you are pregnant. If you want to become pregnant, talk to your doctor. Do not take SUSTIVA if you are breast-feeding. Talk to your doctor if you are breast-feeding your baby.

Can I take other medicines with SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA may change the effect of other medicines (including ones for HIV). Your doctor may change your medicines or change their doses. For this reason, it is very important to:
- Let all your doctors and pharmacists know that you take SUSTIVA.
- Tell your doctors and pharmacists about all medicines you take. This includes those you buy over-the-counter and herbal or natural remedies.

Bring all your medicines when you see a doctor, or make a list of their names, how much you take, and how often you take them. This will give your doctor a complete picture of the medicines you use. Then he or she can decide the best approach for your situation.

The following medicines may cause serious and life-threatening side effects when taken with SUSTIVA. You should not take any of these medicines while taking SUSTIVA**:
- Hismanal® (astemizole)
- Propulsid® (cisapride)
- Versed® (midazolam)
- Halcion® (triazolam)
- Ergot medications (for example, Wigraine® and Cafergot®)

The following medicines may need to be changed or have their dose changed when taken with SUSTIVA**:
- Crixivan® (indinavir)
- Fortovase® (saquinavir)
- Biaxin® (clarithromycin)

How should I keep SUSTIVA?
SUSTIVA is available as 50 mg, 100 mg, and 200 mg capsules.

Keep SUSTIVA at room temperature (77°F) in the bottle given to you by your pharmacist. The temperature can range from 59°-86°F.

Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children.

How can I learn more about SUSTIVA?
Talk to your doctor or other healthcare provider if you have questions about either SUSTIVA or HIV. For additional information you can visit the SUSTIVA website at http://www.sustiva.com.

This medicine was prescribed for your particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep SUSTIVA out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

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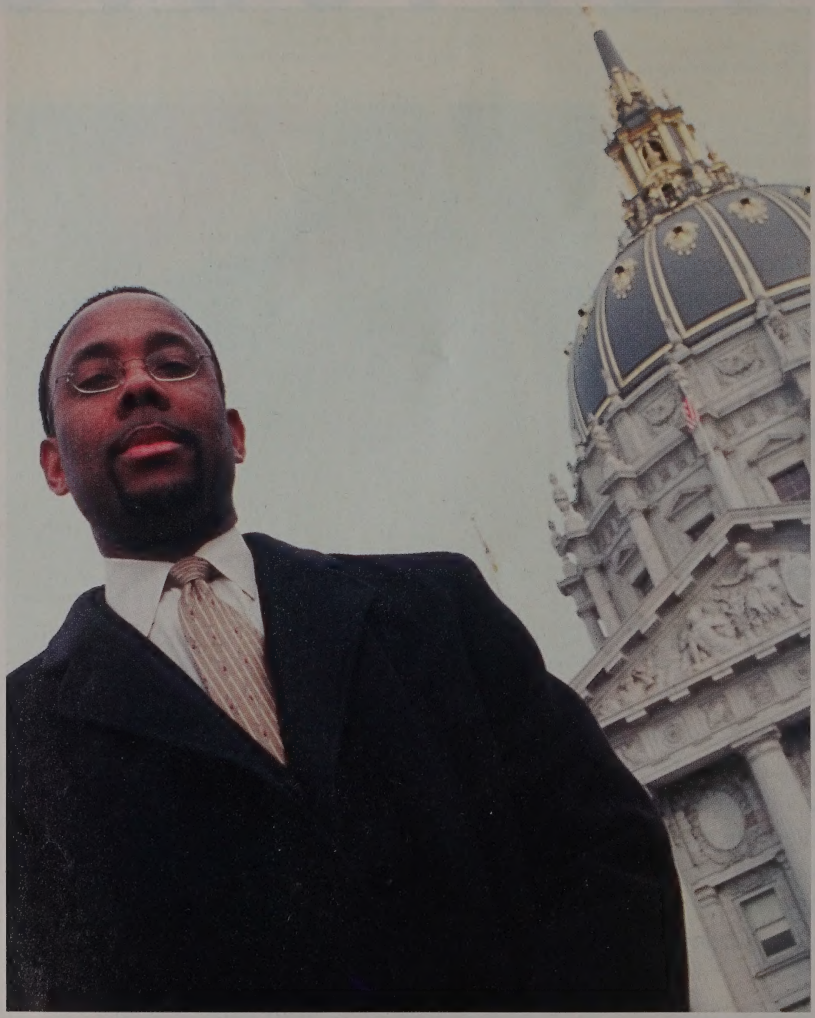
VENUS

On the Cover: Model Andrea Gould, photographed exclusively for Venus by De Alan Wilson. The American Flag is courtesy of Weiss & Mahoney, 5th Ave. NYC, creatively draped as a gown by fashion stylist Jerry Jordan-Brown. Hair & Make-up by Gerard Dure' for Gerard Dure' Salons, NYC. Shot on location at the home of Jack Faxon, NYC.



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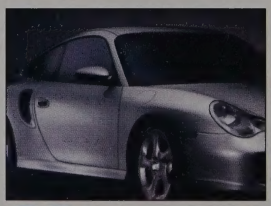

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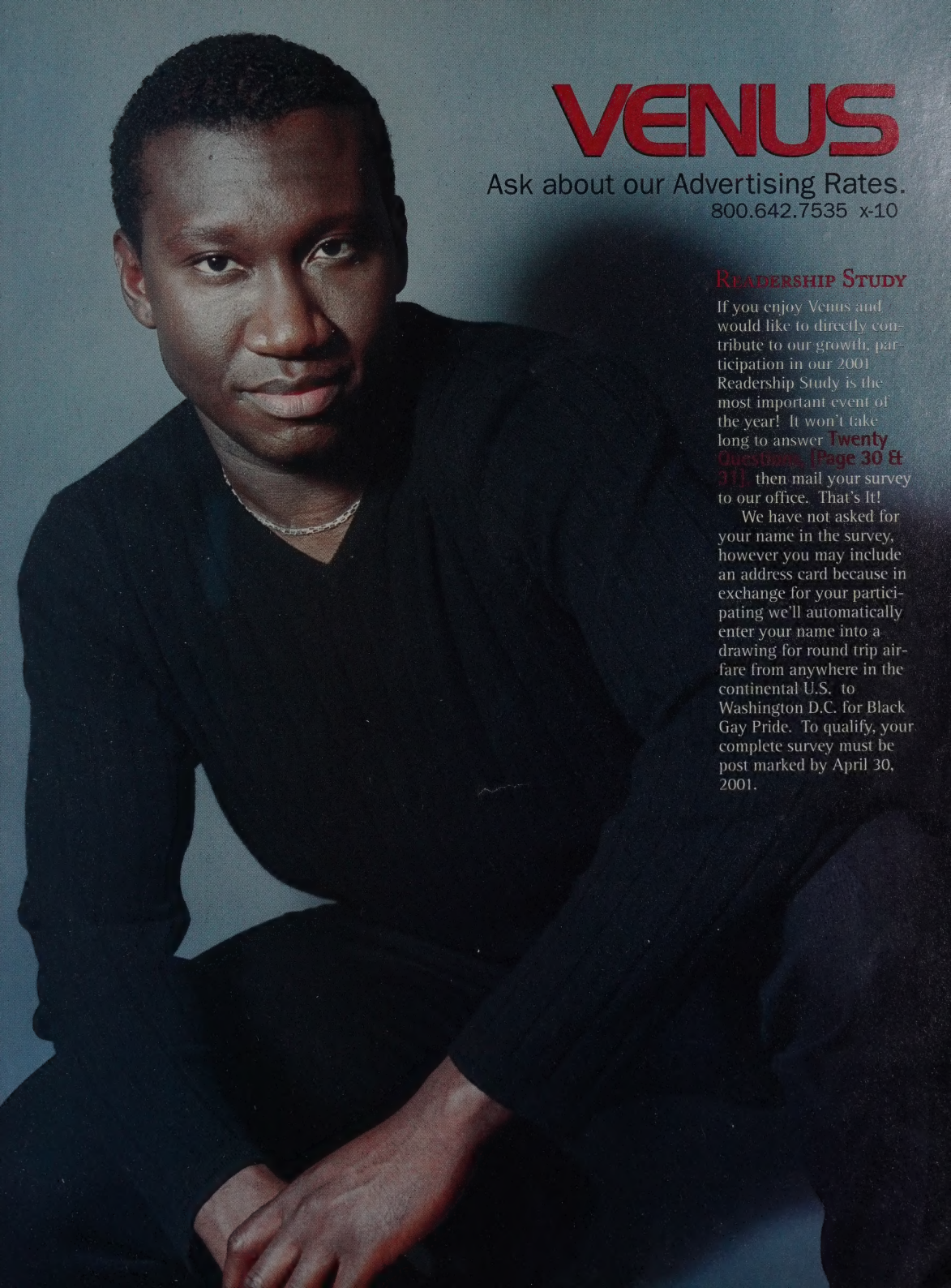

Readership Study

If you enjoy Venus and would like to directly contribute to our growth, participation in our 2001 Readership Study is the most important event of the year! It won't take long to answer Twenty Questions. [Page 30 & 31] then mail your survey to our office. That's It!

We have not asked for your name in the survey, however you may include an address card because in exchange for your participating we'll automatically enter your name into a drawing for round trip airfare from anywhere in the continental U.S. to Washington D.C. for Black Gay Pride. To qualify, your complete survey must be post marked by April 30, 2001.

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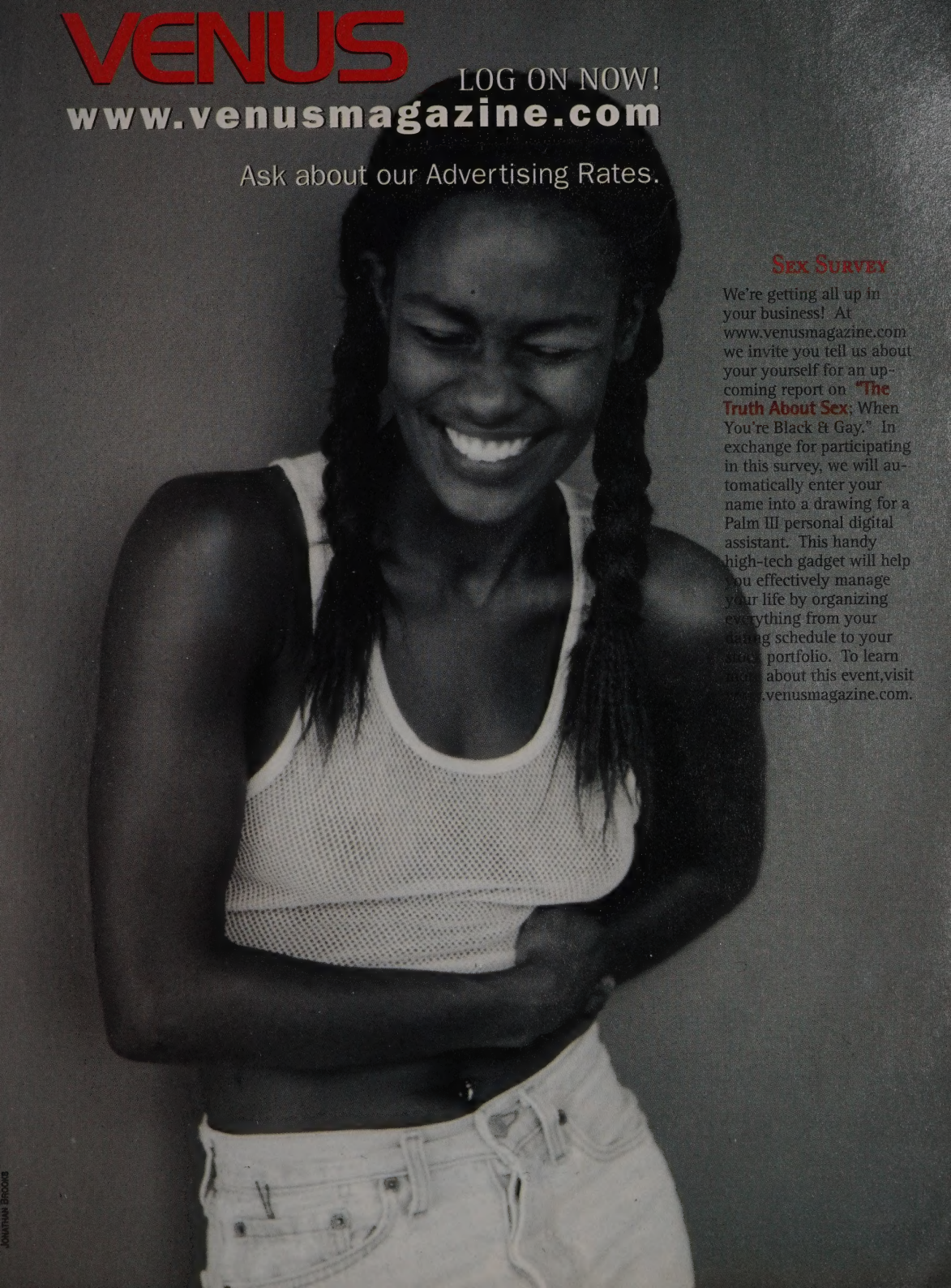
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JONATHAN BROOKS

You're Back!

I am THRILLED that Venus is back on line. The site is Lovely! I am glad back issues are available and that excerpts of the current and back issues are a part of the website.
ERIC, via the internet

Whew!

You all are doing a fabulous job. I (and many others) have been watching and waiting for what you were going to do next, and greater things are expected from you. Your product has a warm, luxurious feel, and I'm personally as proud of it as if I had had a hand in it. That's a hell of a feat, that is, to create an atmosphere in which people can feel an integral part of . . . I hope, though, that when you say that you would love to hear from us, that you're open to some constructive and loving criticism, as well.

Ironically yesterday, I responded to a Detroit Free Press article in which a journalist continually eluded to the "gay community" completely omitting the other half of our culture, that being women us lesbians. What we have learned through endless panel discussions and public dialogue about Black gay/lesbian communities is that men and women in our communities have the same distinct issues as do men and women in other communities. Sexism and dabs of patriarchy are just as alive and well, in our communities.

You all seem to be planning to promote thinking and present articles that reflect lesbian issues, etc., etc., that is clear. But, I'm hopeful that if it is your intention (because I could be mistaken about what they are) for [VENUS] to reflect the goals, dreams, views, and entertainment of both males and females in our communities, then I only suggest that you don't thrust lesbians of African descent into a position of falling under a proverbial gay male umbrella.

I'm considering, not at all to patronize you, that the very term lesbian may not be a part of your everyday language. On the other hand, in a nationally read public magazine, I think that the bar is raised (so to speak) relative to the imperative to reach out, thoroughly so, to be entirely inclusive of both Black gay men, and lesbian women. If we don't, I fear, then, that we take on some of the exact same patterns of other communities who exclude our beautiful presence from their phraseology (and refer to us as, "and others").
Terry Lynn, via the internet

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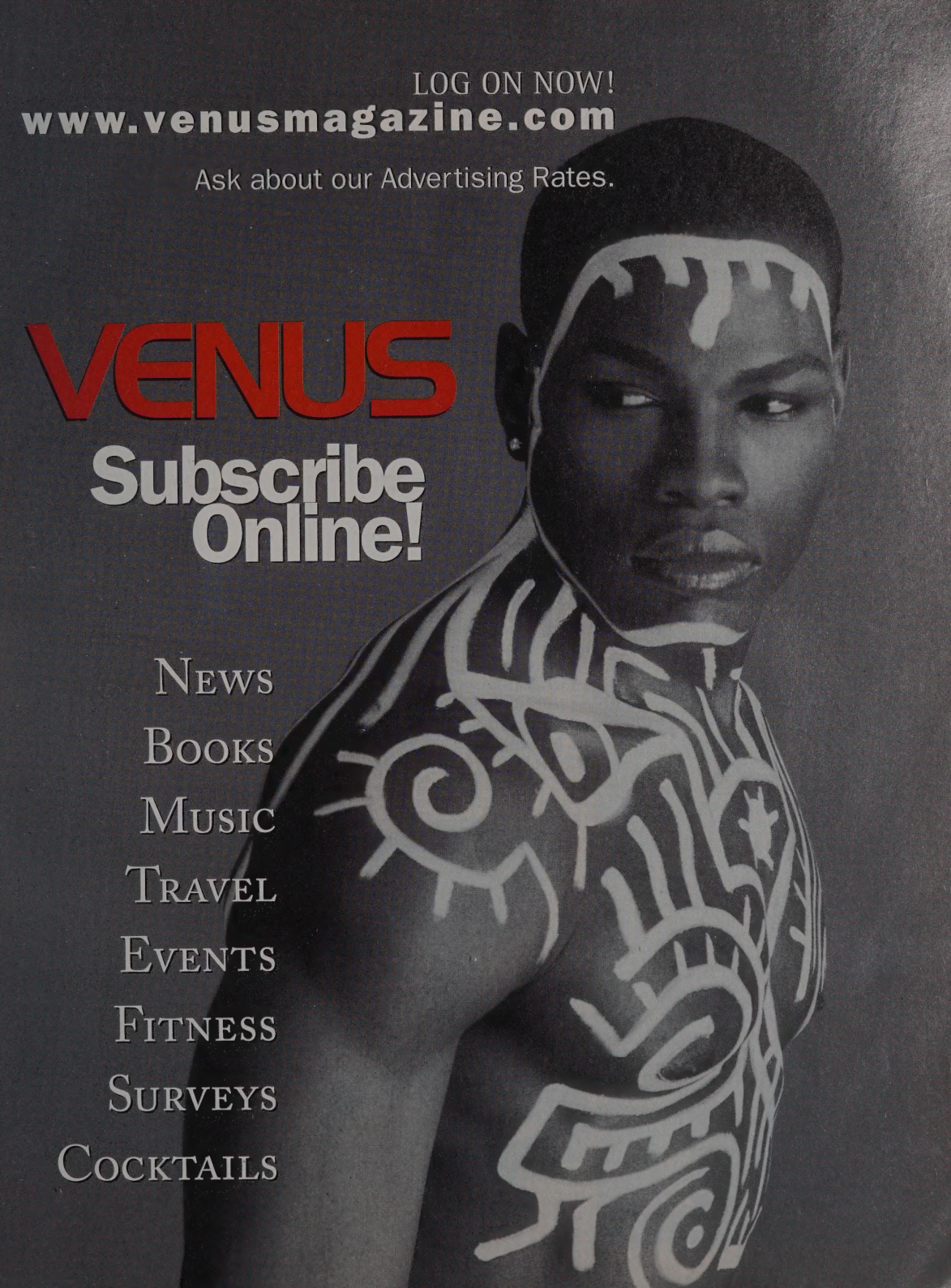
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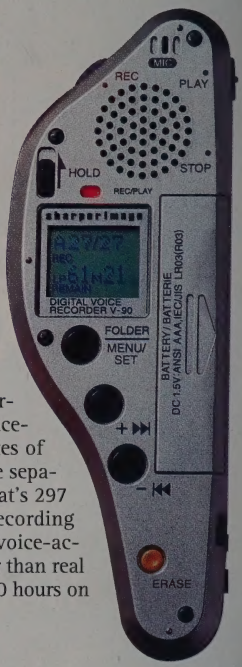
Having exactly what you need makes working from home a breeze. Check our Buying Guide for pricing on page 56.

Automatic Light Controller with Sound & Motion Activation

Replace your "dumb" light switch with this ultra-convenient appliance from Sharper Image. It saves energy, helps keep walls cleaner (it's hands-free!), improves safety in home or office, and has a cool blue LCD menu for foolproof operation. It's great for rooms where users rarely think to turn the lights off. The Sound Sensor's highest setting detects a voice at 20 feet away; there are seven levels, including the lowest (off completely). The Motion Sensor detects "warm" infrared movement only.



Digital Voice Recorder

When anyone starts a sentence with, "Now, don't forget..." reach for this superior memo recorder with voice-activated microphone, dynamic speaker and 90 minutes of flash memory. Recordings can be organized into three separate folders, each capable of storing 99 messages – that's 297 distinct memos. LCD screen shows time, date and recording time remaining. Select high or low sensitivity for the voice-activated microphone. Quick-play option goes 30% faster than real time. Includes convenient hand strap. Runs for about 10 hours on one AAA battery.

Palm IIIc

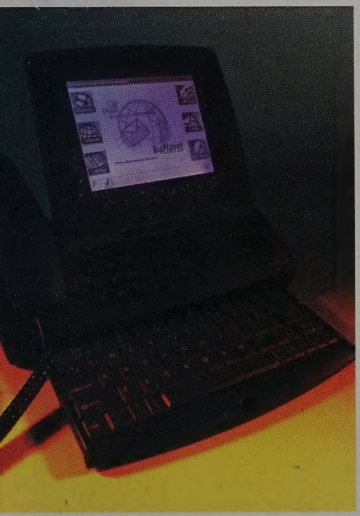
Palm organizers are invaluable in organizing our lives, but that dull black-and-white screen just gets tedious after a while. Well, now you can organize in color! All your most important information- calendar, e-mail, address book, date book, and memos- leap out in bright, cheerful colors that'll stimulate even the most worn-out worker. Its vivid matrix TFT color display provides high contrasts that make reading easier, and you can synchronize daily with your PC to keep data safe. Don't ever leave home without it.

The Swoper Chair

Move while you sit! Low back pain makes this ergonomic chair a must have for the modern home/office. Introducing the German-engineered Swopper, a revolutionary new concept in sitting. The Swopper converts a seated task into fluid motion that promotes a healthy spine. To Swop, you must begin by adopting the correct sitting position on the Swopper. The opening in the base ring must face front. Legs should be uncrossed with both feet flat on the floor and knees at a 90-degree angle. Sit at the apex of the seat cushion and the Swopper spring design automatically puts your back in the correct posture.

Office Travel Kit

Traveling with a notebook computer is not enough – that's why you need a ready-to-go desktop and drawerful of essential office supplies. The kit includes a sensor pen that blinks silently for cell phone calls; a calculator/LCD alarm clock that displays date, local time and time in 16 world cities; 200-year monthly calendar and a countdown timer; highlighter; eyeglass frame screwdriver; ruler; letter opener; business card holder; stapler and staples; paper clips; Post-It® Notes; scissors and the all-important bottle opener / corkscrew /penknife!



iPhone

If you can use a telephone, you can use the iPhone by BigPlanet. Just plug it in and you're ready to go. There are no programs to load, no viruses to fix, and you don't need to call a computer technician. How do you get to the Internet? Just touch the adjustable tilt screen. How do you check your e-mail? Just touch the screen. How do you look up or dial a phone number? You guessed it-Just touch the screen. Want to send e-mail? Pull out the slide away keyboard and send your e-mail by touching the screen. The unit offers excellent phone, email and browser features to enhance your communications experience as well as a built in digital answering machine.

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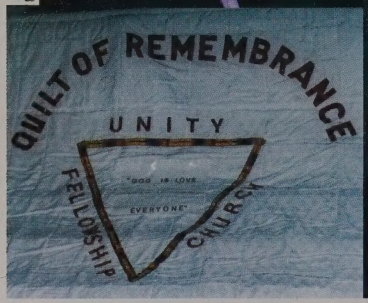
NEIL COLLINS

Reverance and Remembrance

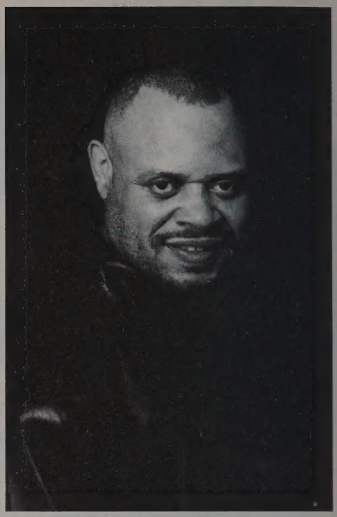
The Bishop Zachery Jones, (l) pastor of Unity Fellowship Church in Brooklyn, NY leads worshippers in a service of remembrance during their annual World AIDS Day event last December. The Honorable Fernando Ferrer, Bronx Borough President, also gave remarks.



Nancy Wilson hosts "A Celebration of Life: Rising Above Breast Cancer"

JOHN LEVY

African American women are dying at higher rates than any other ethnic groups according to the National Cancer Institute. A Celebration of Life:Rising Above Breast Cancer examines this disturbing fact and the three crucial reasons that lead to this outcome: fear, lack of access to health care and racial and economic bias. A one hour documentary hosted by the legendary singer Nancy Wilson, celebrates the lives of African American women who have survived breast cancer and work to educate others about early detection and taking charge of their own breast health. Presented by Howard University Television, the program will air in April -National Cancer Awareness Month. Check local listings. www.acelebrationoflife.org



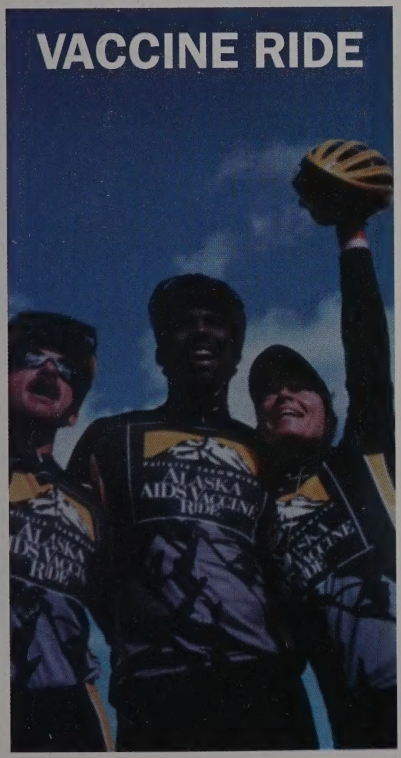
The Wright Touch

Israel Wright Inducted into Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame

Chicago banker/activist, Israel Wright, who turned a photography hobby into a full time, full service company, was recently inducted into the Chicago Gay & Lesbian Hall of Fame. Wright's photos have been internationally published and have been exhibited at museum and community venues throughout Chicago and Milwaukee. His work is included in "The Faces of AIDS," funded by the Chicago Department of Public Health, a traveling exhibit of photographs from a book of the same name, as well as "The Journey," recording African American life on the eve of the new century. An activist at heart, Wright has held leadership positions since 1982 in the Chicago Area Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; Chicago 2006 Gay Games; ONYXmen, Inc.; Adodi Chicago; Chicago Black Pride 2000; Horizons Community Services; Minority Outreach Intervention Project; Gerber/Hart Library; Midwest Men's Center of Chicago; and S.H.A.R.P. (Southside Health and AIDS Resource Providers).

More than 1,500 men & women from the U. S. and beyond completed the first-ever Pallotta TeamWorks' Alaska AIDS Vaccine Ride, a 510-mile, six-day bicycle journey from Fairbanks to Anchorage, last August. They raised 4.1 million in net proceeds benefitting the work of three of the world's most respected AIDS research scientists and their teams - Dr. Irvin Chen of UCLA AIDS Institute, Dr. David Ho of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center and Dr. Rafi Ahmed of the Emory Vaccine Center-as they work to eradicate AIDS through vaccine.

Registrations are now being accepted for the Pallotta TeamWorks' AIDS Vaccine Ride 2001. Riders, crew members and volunteers are encouraged to join the 6000 anticipated participants. For more information on Pallotta TeamWorks' AIDS Vaccine Rides, call (888) 553-4567 or visit www.vaccineride.org.



Frankie Knuckles

Grammy Award winner, Frankie Knuckles and the incomparable Jocelyn Brown made a rare Chicago appearance at The House of Blues.

Jocelyn Brown

Father of House Frankie Knuckles was the first ever recipient of the Grammy for "Remixer of the Year" in 1997. His influence as a disc jockey revolutionized dance music and played a pivotal role in the creation of "House" music which has become the universal staple of dance clubs. Knuckles' credits as a producer of Platinum remixes include Toni Braxton's "Unbreak My Heart". His fans are currently enjoying the release of a 2-CD compilation entitled "Chioce" featuring some of his favorite dance music. **Recognize!** The voice of Jocelyn Brown is one of most recognizable in the music industry. Her hits include such classic dance tunes as "Somebody Else's Guy" and "Caught Up In A One Night Love Affiar." Brown has worked with Michael Jackson, Bette Midler--who called her "Magnificent!", John Lennon, Luther Vandross, Quincy Jones and George Benson.

Stress. What is it? How does it affect us & how do we get it to Back Off?

by Dr. Robert Shire

The American Heritage Dictionary defines Stress as: A mentally, emotionally or physically disruptive or disquieting influence that tends to strain or deform a body. This is not exactly what you would like to have happen to your body daily, yet stress is totally unavoidable. It's important to recognize our own personal stress signals and more importantly learn what can be done to reduce, remove or manage this force upon our bodies and upon our health.

The Pressure

It's important to understand the different types of stress on the body. Physical stress can be exemplified by such events as a traumatic car accident, the birthing process, learning to walk or simply holding a telephone with a bent neck. Chemical stress may be caused by vaccinations, antibiotics, caffeine, sugar, smoke and alcohol just to name a few. Emotional stress, which can have the most profound effect, may be caused by life events such as divorce, death of a loved one, illness of a family member, public speaking, or just having a bad hair day.

Since most people experience at least two of these stresses daily, there is little or no chance to experience 100% health and vitality.

The Release

The good news is that the human body is a self-healing organism. If all or most of the 'interference' is removed from the nervous system, it helps the body to defend itself, thus allows us to experience optimum health and vitality.

Find a good chiropractor.

Chiropractors specialize in locating and correcting the effects of stress in the body and allowing the body to develop new strategies for dealing with stress.

Chiropractors primarily focus on the spine because it protects the most important system of the body, the nervous system. The nervous system begins in the brain, extends to the body via the spinal cord, and is responsible for controlling and coordinating the function of every cell, tissue, muscle and organ of the body. It is the master controller. It is even intimately involved with immune function. When the nervous system is functioning free from interference the result is health and wellness. When the effects of stress take it's toll on the body, the spine acts like a circuit breaker and the weak areas misalign and put pressure on nerves. These subluxations interfere with how the body functions. If left unattended for extended periods they will lead to dis-ease or a lack of ease and eventually symptoms. Chiropractors are experts at removing or reducing these subluxations (the cause of dis-ease) through safe and gentle adjustments to the spine. This allows your body to rebalance and heal.

It's as simple as that.

Aside from seeing your chiropractor, here are some other things you can do to relieve the stress in your life.

"When the effects of stress take it's toll on the body, the spine acts like a circuit breaker and the weak areas misalign and put pressure on nerves. . . . left unattended for extended periods this can lead to dis-ease or a lack of ease and eventually symptoms."

Breathe

Take a deep breath, drop your shoulders then take another. Just that simple act alone can reduce mountains of stress. Most people are incapable of taking a deep breath because in order to do so you need a flexible spine. Many people unfortunately have very stiff spines that inhibit proper breathing.

Take a walk.

Sometimes just getting out and taking a walk around the block can quiet the mind and body enough to restore back to balance.

Practice Meditation.

Take Yoga, Tai chi, or qi gong. These meditative exercises are proven methods for not only reducing stress but also improving health and vitality.

Get a massage.

Massage therapy can greatly relax muscles and allow the body to restore back to balance.

Listen

Listen to some soft classical music. They say music calms the savage beast. Imagine what it can do for you.

Make time.

Carve out time for yourself. With today's fast paced life remember to take care of yourself first because if you don't you won't be around for anyone else.

One Nerve Left

There are a multitude of ways to reduce stress in your life but only one way to remove it from your nervous system. You have only one nervous system. It runs everything. You can't replace it. Keep it healthy, keep it clear. See your chiropractor for a spinal check up and find out how stress is affecting your health.

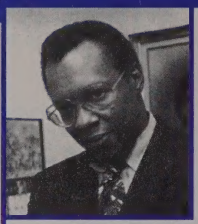
Life is precious. Stop and look around. Your body will thank you and so will your colleagues, friends and family. V

Dr. Robert Shire is a licenesed chiroprator practicing in Scarsdale, NY.

The Healthy Living Pocket Guide

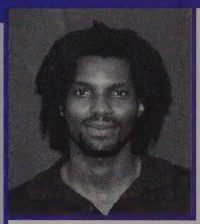
Third edition

Healthy Living



"Information is power. I support the efforts of Cothran Publications to disseminate health information to the African American community. It is now our responsibility to use this information, take action, educate ourselves and pass it on."

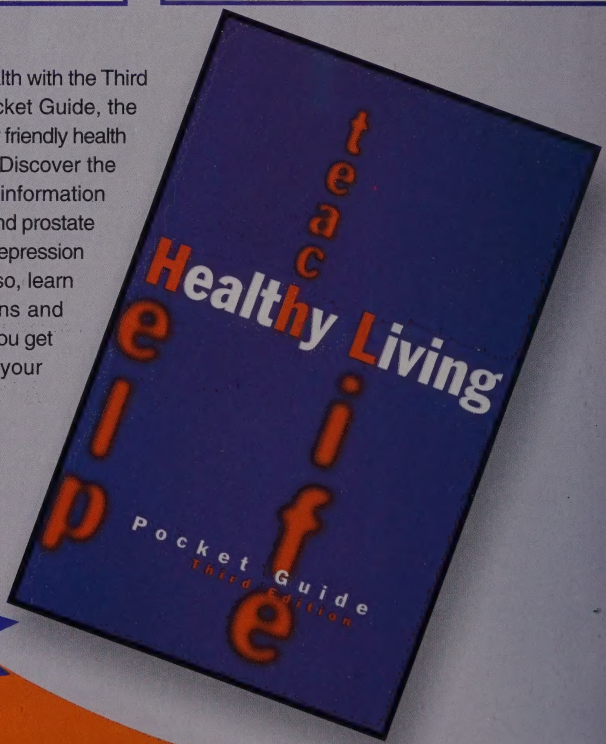
Dr. Stephen B. Thomas,
Emory University



"I've never found a resource that packs so much useful information into a concise guide. And it doesn't just stop at AIDS prevention. Need a primer on women's health issues? The Pocket Guide has got it covered by providing addresses, numbers and contacts in your neck of the 'hood."

LeRoy Whitfield,
Poz Magazine

Share our commitment to good health with the Third Edition of the Healthy Living Pocket Guide, the most informative, concise and user friendly health guide for African Americans today. Discover the very latest prevention & treatment information about HIV/AIDS, breast, cervical and prostate cancers, heart health, hepatitis, depression and addictions, and more! Also, learn how to contact organizations and individuals who can help you get involved in improving your health.



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In Office & Out!

Black Gay & Lesbian Elected and Public Officials are Fierce & Passionate About Service

by Crystal H. Weston

When Decatur, Georgia, Mayor Elizabeth Wilson summoned Kecia Cunningham into her office, Cunningham knew something was up, but couldn't figure out what. Then Mayor Wilson lowered the boom.

"I'm going to retire in two years and want you to run for my seat on the City Commission."

That was an incredible moment, Cunningham remembers. But there were caveats about her candidacy perhaps the mayor didn't understand.

"I don't know my next-door neighbors very well," Cunningham offered feebly.

"That's OK. We'll work on that," the mayor said.

"Well, I don't have a church home," Cunningham cautioned.

"That's OK. We'll work on that," the mayor repeated.

"I'm a lesbian," Cunningham finally blurted out.

"That's OK," Mayor Wilson retorted, "we'll work on that, too."

Cunningham became a candidate and won the commissioner's seat and is an example of a new breed of politician-- black, gay or lesbian and out--holding elective and appointed offices across the nation.

An increasing number of Black lesbians and gays who are out made it into public service during the 1990s despite a prevailing homophobia.

"We know all about that," says Philip Reed, the only out Black member of the New York City Council. If I let that get me down, I wouldn't get up in the morning. That's not a good enough excuse for me."

Not every gay and lesbian politician is so forthright. There can be dire consequences. Members of an unpopular minority group, lesbians and gays campaign with few legal protections against discrimination or other maltreatment. A primary concern of closeted politicians is that they will be pegged as a single-issue candidate, that is, concerned only about gay issues and, consequently, lose credibility with non-gay voters. It's a conundrum. What value to the LGBT community is the politician if he or she can't advocate for it?

Reed "was able on some level to raise my profile and find people who wanted to support me, financially. If I'd remained anonymous, in terms of my sexual orientation, perhaps I would not have had that experience."

Being out actually "makes [running] a lot easier," Commissioner Cuningham believes. " . . . If you're in the closet, there's always the fear of what happens if they find out. Nowadays politics and campaigning are all about mudslinging. You run a far greater risk of having it go negative because people will think you are trying to hide it."

"I don't have any choice, but to be out," George Smith, the first former homeless person appointed

Gregory A. Farley

Commissioner Kecia Cunningham City of Decatur, Georgia

"Our communities are looking for people who are willing to serve on boards and commissions. It may not be glamorous, it may be the waste management board, but the experience you get can put you in a better position to serve on the planning commission, which would put you in a better position to run for the city commission or the city council. Be willing to give back and one of these days someone may call you to their dining room table and tell you, `I want you to run.' "

to run the San Francisco Mayors' Office on homelessness said when we interviewed him. Smith was appointed by Mayor Brown. A former drug addict who became homeless, Smith became a fixture in the city's shelter system.

"But I didn't like the way I was being treated," he said, and vowed someday "to make the system work better."

A homeless advocate, Smith landed a junior position in the Mayor's Office on Homelessness and worked his way up to Director. On the way up, he managed the shelter in which he once stayed. "I've been blessed that the Mayor gave me the opportunity," Smith opined. "What I learned when I was getting clean off drugs is that when you hide and you're ashamed of things, you give power to other people to use those things against you. I've been through hell and back. I've paid my dues. I'm not ashamed and from that I get strength."

Smith's is not a singular story, but a twice-told tale to those in our community who have stepped out in electoral politics. The 1990s spawned a new group of Black LGBT politicians that is not preoccupied with serving from inside closets and see such efforts as potential hindrances.

"It's about integrity, honesty, and speaking from a place of truth and safety," asserts Andrea Shorter, appointed by San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown to the Community College Board. "If you can't advocate for yourself, how can you advocate for other people?" That's the point of running for any office: helping to empower your constituents.

New York City Councilman Reed says that "In direct elective office, you're not playing an advisory role; you are really in the process of making policy." New York City School Board Member Doug Robinson agrees. "There are all these major boards that white men have created over the years. There's money and decisions being made at these high levels. If we're not there, we can't complain."

The problem, of course, is getting there. Fundamentally, many of us are intimidated by politics--its customs, and its lingo. "Just jump in there and try to learn as much as you can," advises Community College Board member Shorter. "Don't be discouraged. You'll always run up against people who

want to maintain the status quo, want to guard the old way of doing things, and are suspicious of queer people wanting to do things. Take positions of leadership. You're going to make mistakes and more than likely you will live through it."

Shorter ran unsuccessfully to maintain the San Francisco Community College Trustee seat she was appointed to mid-term. She is now an appointed member of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women.

Many persons get into politics from an advocacy position, or watchdogs of the system. "My partner and I have two children, 15 and 12 years old," School Board Member Robinson says. "I had always been on the other side as a parent advocate. The principal of my younger son's school asked me to run." New York City Councilman Reed recommends joining your block association, church association, or community advisory board. "[Then] go to the meeting; they'll tell you what to do next." Reed worked as a community activist for 20 years, then ran for his seat unsuccessfully in 1991. He prevailed when he ran again in 1997.

Robinson asserts that we should "work in the Black lesbian and gay community, but [also] work in the general community and build alliances."

Cunningham reminds us that one's "stripes" are earned in many ways. "Our communities are looking for people who are willing to serve on boards and commissions. It may not be glamorous, it may be the waste management board, but the experience you get can put you in a better position to serve on the planning commission, which would put you in a better position to run for the city commission or the city council. Be willing to give back and one of these days someone may call you to their dining room table and tell you, 'I want you to run.'"

Robinson put it plainly: to fully participate in politics -- and in life, in general -- "we have to learn to be more comfortable with ourselves and we have to be out."

The point is to get involved and see where it takes you. That's the decision BLG pioneers made in the early 1990s. They were "firsts" and stepped out on faith. In 1991, Sherry Harris made history when she won a seat on the Seattle, Washington, City Council and became the first out African-American elected to public office. A year later, Kenneth Reeves ran for the mayor of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He made history when he won becoming the first out African American to head a major US city. Today, he is a member of the Cambridge City Council. Sabrina Sojourner joined the list of firsts when she ran for US Representative (shadow senator) for the nation's capital and won. She was the first out Black lesbian or gay person elected to public office in Washington, D.C.

The phrase is old, oft-repeated, and has been a rallying cry for every group seeking political, social, and economic respect, and our community is no different: the youth are our future. Shorter recalls that many San Franciscan Black LGBTs were "energized" and inspired to find ways to contribute when she was initially appointed, but in order to continue to do so "African-American LGBT and questioning, especially youth, must see their own running and appointed to positions of authority and power."

"It's very distressing to me that kids don't have role models," laments Robinson. It's important for people of color to step up to the plate and say I'm a lesbian or gay man, a role model, and can contribute to the community. Once you're out, it relieves all that burden and baggage that being in the closet does [bring]." V

"Don't be discouraged. You'll always run up against people who want to maintain the status quo, want to guard the old way of doing things, and are suspicious of queer people wanting to do things. Take positions of leadership. You're going to make mistakes and more than likely you will live through it."

Sherri Harris, former City Council member from Seattle Washington, was the first out African American ever elected to public office.

BLGBTGOP

by Clayton Ralph Wilson

That's Right! Log Cabin's Black Gay Republicans

For many black voters, the Republican Party brings up ominous apparitions such as: Senator Jesse Helms (NC-R) and his brand of states' rights; Justice Clarence Thomas, the conservative Supreme Justice who said it wasn't unconstitutional for prison guards to beat inmates; the religious right and its opposition to abortions; and a party adamantly against affirmative action. Nonetheless, there is growing influx of black lesbians and gays who are registering with the Grand Old Party (GOP) and who are active within it. In fact, there is now a national organization for gay and lesbian Republicans--the Log Cabin Republicans.

Making the switch from D to R represents a change from the "soft bigotry" of the Democratic Party, said one Black lesbian. And according to Leonard Green, a New York City resident, "It allows me to be around people who think the way that I think politically. It is important that African

Americans, whether gay or straight, do not allow the Democratic Party to take them for granted, which I think has happened for a long time," said Green, the publisher of a conservative magazine, The Right Angle, and a former board member of the New York City chapter of the Log Cabin.

Frustration with the Democratic Party seems to be a common theme which attracts politically motivated Black lesbians and gays to join the Log Cabin. Among Black members of the group, which has over 56 chapters throughout the US, this frustration emerged as a consistent catalyst, which resonates in their enthusiasm and allegiance to the party of Abraham Lincoln.

Vilified by some gay Democrats as 'enigmatic' and 'self-hating', many Black members are drawn to the group simply because they share and support the basic principles that form the core of GOP ideology: limited government, the promotion of individual rights, an emphasis on fiscal responsibility and a tough stand against crime.

Todd Cantwell, a Philadelphia native and computer programmer, is a Republican, but has yet to join the local Log Cabin chapter. He says that his identification with the Republican Party is stronger than with that of the gay community.

"Sure, this a complex thing," explained Cantwell. "Its impossible for me to really choose one aspect of who and what I am over another. But I know me, and my life experience has shown me that blanket support of affirmative action policies is detrimental in the long run to African-Americans. I also think that the abortion situation is out of control, particularly with young people, who take sex very casually. And personally, I support the death penalty."

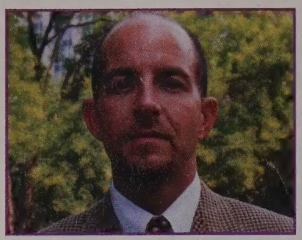
He added, "My lover and I live a simple life and for us, it is easier to tolerate some Republican principles that we disagree with, that Democrats may see as regressive. I have to be true to myself and do what works for me."

Not surprising, several Black members of the Log Cabin Republicans see themselves as effecting a 'change in the debate.' As one lesbian said, "Our mere presence sometimes shakes up the room. And don't let it be several of us in one space at the same time. I think it makes a difference, if even on a small level. We also know that we can further push the party from the inside, to move to the center, which is the most important voting constituency in the country anyway."

After the cliff-hanger 2000 presidential election, there are definitely lower expectations for the George W. Bush administration. Blacks, gays and lesbians and other groups interested in progressive change are cringing at the thought of regressive social policies and the possibility of several Supreme Court appointments. The next four years are not likely to see the appointment of a lesbian or gay liaison to the homosexual community and the Bush adminstration's recent shake up of the White House's AIDS policy office, which counted over a dozen out lesbians and gays on the panel, didn't help.

"Since Blacks and gays did not support Bush in large numbers," says Greene, "they should not expect any special consideration. However, I am confident that he will be President to all the people."

"Sure, this a complex thing," explained Cantwell. "Its impossible for me to really choose one aspect of who and what I am over another. But I know me, and my life experience has shown me that blanket support of affirmative action policies is detrimental in the long run to African-Americans. I also think that the abortion situation is out of control, particularly with young people, who take sex very casually. And personally, I support the death penalty."



If your're thinking of running for public office and you're wondering if you've got what it takes . . .

Contact Brian Bond, (l), at the Victory Fund at 102 14th Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20005, call (202) 842-8679 (202-VICTORY), or visit www.victoryfund.org.

The Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund Wants You!

by Crystal H. Weston

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund -- the only national organization devoted to helping openly lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender candidates get elected to public office is

--celebrating its 10th year.

The Washington-D.C.-based organization provides financial assistance, media and campaign training, and access to consultants. Each state's campaign finance laws determine the allowable financial and in-kind contributions of the Victory Fund.

Executive Director, Brian Bond explains that donors also potentially help dictate which candidate may receive support. "If we are asking them to give money to a candidate in San Francisco, donors may state that there are already elected candidates in San Francisco, and say 'hey, I see [in the candidate profile we distribute] this woman is running in Wilmington, North Carolina; it must be tough for her down there, I'd rather help [her]."

The Victory Fund is nonpartisan, as are many of its candidates because they are running at the school board and other basic levels of elected office. However, among those who run on a party ticket, says Bond, 95% are Democrat, similar to the Victory Fund's donor base.

Are You Ready?

The Victory Fund supports about a quarter of the candidates who approach them through contributions that increase the candidate's budget just enough to allow them to compete. "A lot of people we feel aren't ready to run because they need more training, or [to] build a better strength within their community, or the demographics of the district [significantly lower their chances]," says Bond. Ideally, candidates should approach the Victory Fund for assistance at least a couple years in advance of running.

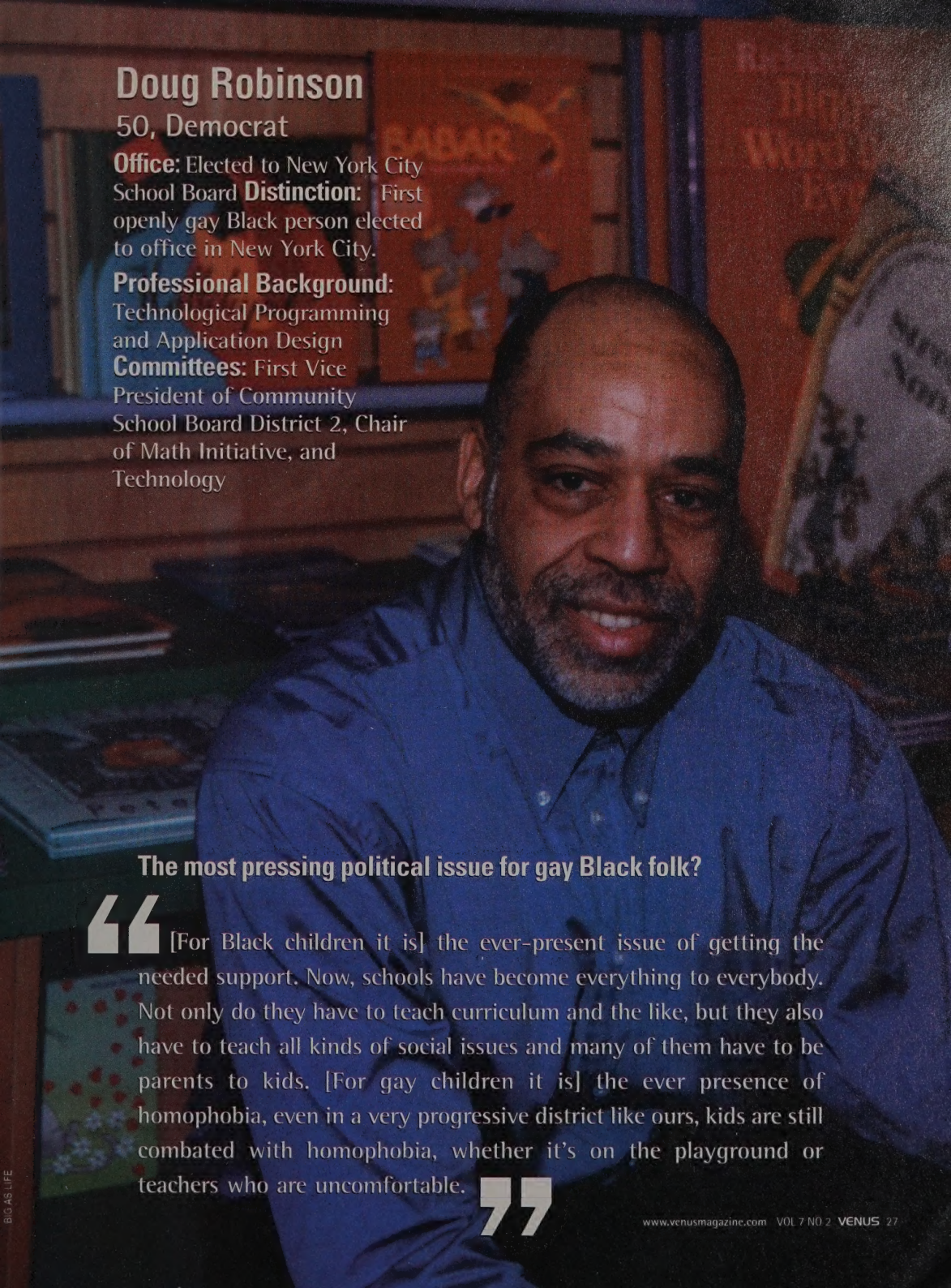
Bond candidly admits "a lot of lip service is given to [the notion of] diversity" and the Victory Fund is only recently in a better position to proactively reach out for candidates. "I need help [recruiting Black candidates]. Let's face it: I'm White [but] I come out of democratic politics and I'm not afraid to push people to run . . . I need support mechanisms to help find potential candidates and get them prepared to run; I want people in the African-American community to know that you can run and win."

Who Said That?

"It has been said that we have no visible leaders or influence, that predominantly white organizations value us only as tokens of diversity."

"Much discussion has occurred around the state of the Black LGBT community and the all but invisible role that we play in the general LGBT movement. It has been said that we have no visible leaders or influence, that predominantly white organizations value us only as tokens of diversity and that ultimately the LGBT movement is about the rights of white LGBT people--none of which is true. Its far too easy to complain that organizations like the Human Rights Campaign, NGLTF and GLAAD don't meet the needs of Black LGBT people. What is much harder and ultimately more important is building and sustaining Black LGBT organizations that are effective at both political activism and community building. Instead of spending so much of our energy criticizing others, let's spend that time developing our own organizations and institutions that will strengthen the Black LGBT community."

Michael Crawford, HRC, Regional Field Worker



Doug Robinson

50, Democrat

Office: Elected to New York City School Board **Distinction:** First openly gay Black person elected to office in New York City.

Professional Background: Technological Programming and Application Design

Committees: First Vice President of Community School Board District 2, Chair of Math Initiative, and Technology

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

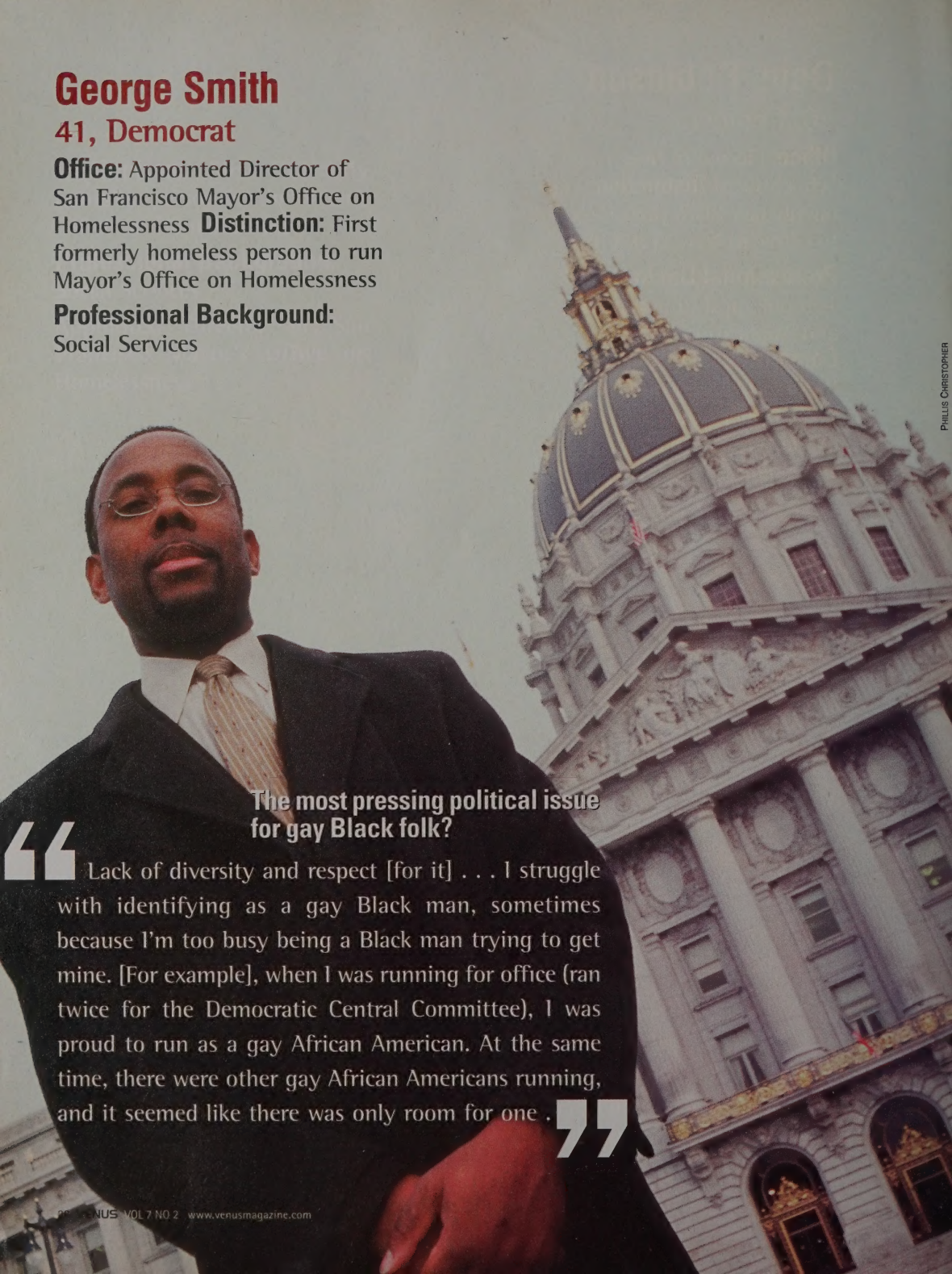
"[For Black children it is] the ever-present issue of getting the needed support. Now, schools have become everything to everybody. Not only do they have to teach curriculum and the like, but they also have to teach all kinds of social issues and many of them have to be parents to kids. [For gay children it is] the ever presence of homophobia, even in a very progressive district like ours, kids are still combated with homophobia, whether it's on the playground or teachers who are uncomfortable."

George Smith

41, Democrat

Office: Appointed Director of San Francisco Mayor's Office on Homelessness **Distinction:** First formerly homeless person to run Mayor's Office on Homelessness

Professional Background: Social Services



PHILLIS CHRISTOPHER

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

"Lack of diversity and respect [for it] . . . I struggle with identifying as a gay Black man, sometimes because I'm too busy being a Black man trying to get mine. [For example], when I was running for office (ran twice for the Democratic Central Committee), I was proud to run as a gay African American. At the same time, there were other gay African Americans running, and it seemed like there was only room for one."

Vision
Commitment
Passion
Excitement
Empowerment
Growth
Teamwork

Come Work With Us.

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Imagine working to ensure basic equal rights for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. That's what we do every day at the Human Rights Campaign.

Chances are that HRC is like no place you've ever worked. Our environment is friendly, full of enthusiasm and professional.

Why not bring your talents and skills to HRC?

As the nation's largest LGBT political organization, we're growing in dynamic new ways. We have a wide range of job opportunities and internships available. We hire the best and the brightest. And we invite you to consider joining our team.

We offer competitive compensation and a great benefits package. We continue to build a workplace that values and celebrates diversity. Women and people of color are encouraged to apply.

Join us — and make a difference!

The following opportunities are open:

- **Lobbyist**
- **Staff Accountants**
- **Fundraising Professionals**
- **Information Technology Professionals**
- **Administrative Support Staff**
- **Internships & Fellowships**

To apply, please forward a letter of interest and resume to:

Human Rights Campaign
919 18th St., N.W., Suite 800, Washington, D.C. 20006
Fax: 202-216-1595 E-mail: careers@hrc.org

Or call (202) 628-4160 and ask for Human Resources.

20 QUESTIONS!

PERSONAL INFORMATION:

1. Age: ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56-65 ☐ over 65

2. Ethnic Identification: ☐ African-American ☐ Caribbean ☐ African ☐ Latina/o ☐ Multicultural ☐ Non Black

3. Annual Household Income:
   ☐ under 20,000 ☐ 20,000-39,999 ☐ 40,000–59,999 ☐ 60,000–79,999
   ☐ 80,000–99,999 ☐ 100,000–159,999 ☐ over 160,000

4. Which of the following best describes your household's primary residence? (PLEASE "X" ONE.)
   ☐ Own a house ☐ Rent a house ☐ Own a co-op
   ☐ Own a condominium ☐ Rent an apartment ☐ Other_____

5. Gender Identification: ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. Highest Educational Level:
   ☐ Some high school ☐ Undergraduate degree ☐ Doctorate degree
   ☐ Some college ☐ Masters degree ☐ Masters/Doctorate student

READING AND USING VENUS

7. How many of the last issues of Venus have you or other members of your household actually read?
   ☐ 4 out of 4 ☐ 3 out of 4 ☐ 2 out of 4 ☐ 1 out of 4

8. Which of the following do you or other members of your household recall doing as a result of reading VENUS Magazine? (PLEASE "X" ALL THAT APPLY)
   ☐ Used travel information ☐ Purchased product or service advertised
   ☐ Kept a book review ☐ Kept issue with ad for reference
   ☐ Used conference, entertainment info ☐ Used the classified section

PERSONAL ATTITUDE

9. Which of the following statements BEST describes your personality? (PLEASE "X" ONLY ONE)
   ☐ "I consider myself bold, daring, adventurous and courageous."
   ☐ "I like to do things that are unconventional."
   ☐ "I'm always seeking new ways to express myself."
   ☐ "I consider myself a trendsetter."
   ☐ "I consider myself a person who thinks indepedently."

AUTOMOBILE PURCHASE PLANS

10. Do you or other members of your household plan to purchase or lease a domestic or import vehicle in the next 12 months?
    Plan to buy/lease a domestic vehicle in 12 mos. ☐ Yes ☐ No
    Plan to buy/lease an import vehicle in 12 mos. ☐ Yes ☐ No

INTERNET PURCHASES

11. In the past 12 months did you or any other household members make any purchases through the internet?
    ☐ Yes ☐ No

Complete VENUS MAGAZINE'S Readership Survey Today & Win!

TOBACCO CONSUMPTION

12. Are you or any one in your household a current smoker?
☐ Yes ☐ No

13. How many cigarettes do you, yourself smoke per day?
☐ None ☐ 5 or less ☐ 6–10 ☐ 11–15 ☐ 16–20 ☐ 20 or more

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION

14. Do you or anyone in your household consume alcoholic beverages?
☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Which is your alcoholic beverage of choice?
☐ vodka ☐ gin ☐ cognac ☐ whiskey ☐ tequila ☐ rum ☐ wine

16. Which types of beer do you, yourself most prefer?
☐ Domestic ☐ Imported ☐ None

17. When ordering liquor at restaurants or clubs, which do you, yourself most prefer?
☐ Premium brand ☐ House brand

PRODUCT OWNERSHIP/PURCHASE INTENTIONS

18. Which of the following products do you or other members of your household currently own or plan to purchase in the next 12 months ? (PLEASE "X" ALL THAT APPLY.)

Computer equipment/software
- Personal Computer (PC) ☐
- Laptop computer ☐

Communications Devices:
- Cellular phone ☐
- Pager/beeper ☐
- MP3 ☐
- Palm organizer ☐

Audio/Video equipment:
- Compact disc (CD) player ☐
- Camcorder/video camera ☐
- Digital camera ☐

Membership to Fitness Facility:
- 5 year membership ☐
- 2 year membership ☐
- 1 year or less membership ☐
- Membership associated with work ☐

SURVEY INSTRUCTIONS

WHY? ITS IMPORTANT TO THE GROWTH OF THIS PUBLICATION. ADVERTISERS WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK AND DO.

HOW? ANSWER EACH QUESTION, TEAR OUT OR PHOTO COPY AND MAIL TO: **VENUS MAGAZINE, READERSHIP SURVEY, P. O. BOX 150 HASTINGS ON HUDSON, NY 10706 OR FAX TO 914-376-4441**

WHEN? THE SOONER, THE BETTER! EACH SURVEY POST MARKED BY APRIL 30, 2001 WILL **QUALIFY TO WIN** ROUND TRIP AIRFARE TO WASHINGTON, D. C. FOR BLACK GAY PRIDE!

WE HAVE NOT ASKED FOR YOUR NAME IN THE SURVEY, HOWEVER TO QUALIFY FOR THE PRIZE, PLEASE BE SURE TO INCLUDE AN ADDRESS CARD WHEN RETURNING YOUR SUBMISSION. ONE SURVEY PER PERSON. DUPLICATES WILL BE ELIMINATED.

Entertainment

19. How often do you or members of your household enjoy the following:

Purchasing Music CDs	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐
Attend a Live Concert	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐
Attend a Movie	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐
Attend Live Theatre	Every Week? ☐	Every month? ☐	Every Holiday? ☐	Every Now&Then? ☐	Never? ☐

Travel

20. Do you, yourself, have a valid Passport? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Been on Cruise a inthe last 24 months? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Traveled Outside the U.S. in the last 24 months? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Don't miss the greatest opportunity to reach out to the gay and lesbian community!

The GayLifeExpo

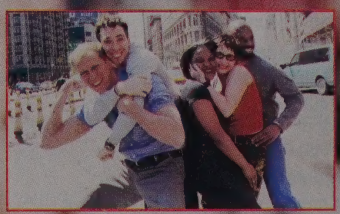
BY US. FOR US.

GayLifeExpo2

Philadelphia, PA

July 21st & 22nd, 2001

Pennsylvania Convention Center



GayLifeExpo3

New York City, NY

Sept. 15th & 16th, 2001

Jacob Javits Convention Center

in cooperation with the 7th Annual Philadelphia International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, July 5-16. Call 215-733-0608 x37.

For more information on booths and sponsorships, call 212-352-3535

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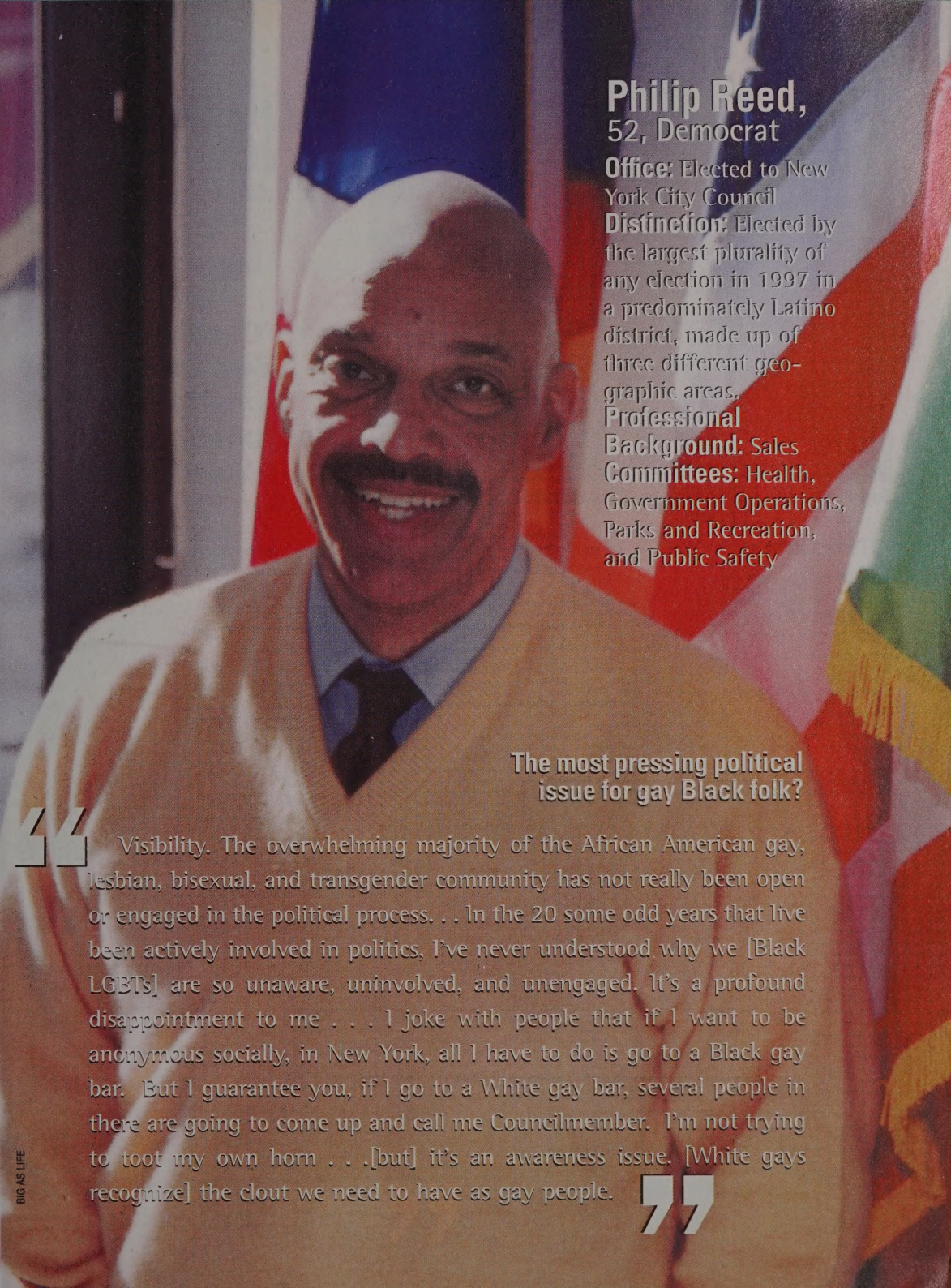


Philip Reed,
52, Democrat

Office: Elected to New York City Council

Distinction: Elected by the largest plurality of any election in 1997 in a predominately Latino district, made up of three different geographic areas.

Professional Background: Sales

Committees: Health, Government Operations, Parks and Recreation, and Public Safety

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

"Visibility. The overwhelming majority of the African American gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community has not really been open or engaged in the political process. . . In the 20 some odd years that I've been actively involved in politics, I've never understood why we [Black LGBTs] are so unaware, uninvolved, and unengaged. It's a profound disappointment to me . . . I joke with people that if I want to be anonymous socially, in New York, all I have to do is go to a Black gay bar. But I guarantee you, if I go to a White gay bar, several people in there are going to come up and call me Councilmember. I'm not trying to toot my own horn . . .[but] it's an awareness issue. [White gays recognize] the clout we need to have as gay people."

Political Pie

by Crystal H. Weston

Ingredients: Officials, Candidates, Aides, Donors, Constituents, Consultants, and Volunteers!

BIG AS LIFE

Joe Pressely, candidate for City Council, NYC.

A Tablespoon of Candidate

In Brooklyn, 37 year-old Joey B. Pressley, former Executive Director of Gay Men of African Descent, recently announced his foray into the race for New York's 35th Council District. "I am so excited about this race; to become the first openly Black gay elected official in Brooklyn would be tremendous."

Despite his optimism, he is disheartened by nay-sayers, "When I hear people say, 'Well, why do you want to do that?' What I hear [them really saying] is 'why do you want to be so out?' I have as much right as anyone else to run for City Council. It's about building a new world and making sure we all have a say in how our communities are developed and serviced."

A Dash of Consultant

In Oakland, California 33 year-old Darrel Lamont Carey worked four years in local government. He realized he'd successfully gotten many candidates elected "on the side" and decided to go into business for himself. Two and a half years later his political consulting firm continues to help candidates get elected to office. "I'm the bully," says Carey, "When I deal with my candidates, it is a one-to-one relationship. Together we plan the overall rules of the campaign: finance, the ground operation, and the public relations campaign."

He takes pride in his community-based approached to running campaigns, hence the moniker Grassroots Engineer. "We actually get out to the neighborhoods, pull people together [for] focus groups and plan house parties. I know community people, not just the poobahs downtown."

"When I hear people say, 'Well, why do you want to do that?' What I hear [them really saying] is 'why do you want to be so out?"

A Cup of Aide

"My role is to be able to give her information that she needs to make an effective decision, says Michael O'Connor, Legislative Aide to Illinois State Representative Constance Howard.

A long time Chicago community activist who got his start during his youth tagging along with his aunt who was a precinct captain in democratic politics, O'Connor recognizes the dual benefit of his political position and uses it to bring awareness about Black LGBT communities to policy makers. "When people know my sexual orientation and are discussing policy, they tend to be a lot more inclusive in their strategies for solutions. The advantages of being a gay man are that I have a unique perspective that I can bring to the table about outreach to the entire Black community."

Andrea D. Shorter
35, Democrat

Office: Appointed to San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women **Distinction:** Only African-American lesbian or gay in an elected seat in San Francisco in 1996 when appointed Trustee to San Francisco Community College District **Professional Background:** Criminal and Juvenile Justice Advocacy **Committees:** Chair of Girls Issues and Safety

The most pressing political issue for gay Black folk?

"Not depending on the predominate leadership in the lesbian and gay community to give voice to our concerns. It's not only unfair to us, it's unfair to place that expectation on other people. That's part of our political maturity, and part of our claiming our own voice. San Francisco has had a tradition [of lesbian and gay leadership] for the last couple of decades and it has been predominately White, not minority driven. Trying to carve out a position in that leadership had its challenges, but overall people were accepting [of the fact] that a Black lesbian had a voice."

PHYLLIS CHRISTOPHER

TestDrive

by Rod Monteiro

Pay Attention. There WILL be a quiz after this section. We've cruised all the auto shows and came up with these beauties for your 2001 car shopping spree. Go file that tax return, then go for a ride!

Kia Sportage Climb Mt. Everest!

How would you like an SUV able to climb Mt. Everest? Well, you can't have one. What you can have, however, is the next best thing, the Kia Sportage SUV. This affordable and luxurious SUV has 130 horsepower 16-valve dual-overhead-cam engine and double-wishbone front suspension making mountain driving seem like a ride in the park. Its interior has 125.7 cubic feet, enough stor-

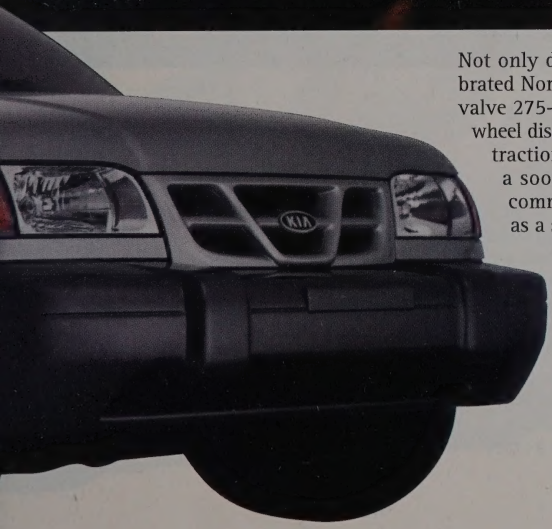
age for your entire family and dual front airbags. Its 6 high-tech speakers will keep you rocking steady. Available in a 4-door model or a 2-door convertible model, it comes with a polished stainless-steel rear sports bar to hang your towel at the beach.

Mercedes. Unmatched Comfort

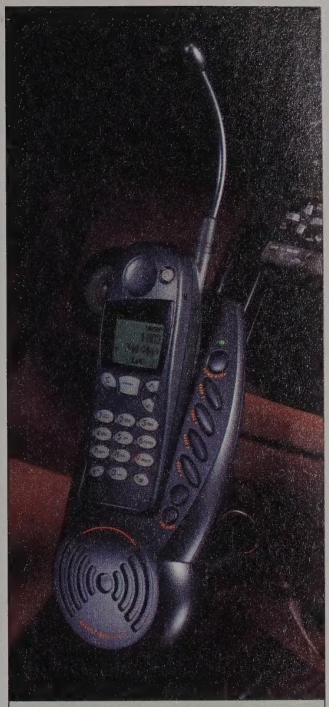
The efficiency, beauty and luxury of the Mercedes E-Class remains unrivaled in craftsmanship, versatility, power, and of course, sensual, timeless beauty. Equipped with leather interior, dual-zone climate control, an 8-speaker audio system, dual air bags, and EPS traction and stability control.

Cadillac DeVille Arrive in Style!

The Cadillac DeVille brings together the technology of the twenty-first century with the style and elegance that is the hallmark of the Cadillac.



Not only does it contain the celebrated Northstar System and a 32-valve 275-hp V8 engine, but four-wheel disc brakes and an all-speed traction control system. Enjoy a soothing massage on your commute from work, as well as a six-disc CD changer and power sunroof. It also boasts a top-of-the-line infrared Night Vision, which displays an image of objects ahead right on your windshield.



Hands-Free Cell Phone Kit

Cellular phones have made commute time more productive, but driving with one hand can be dangerous. Now you can turn your cell phone into a car speaker phone and drive safer, with both hands free to steer, shift and signal. This cell-phone cradle plugs into your car's lighter socket and is powered by your car's battery. It features a microphone, speaker and volume control so you can hear and be heard in the heaviest traffic. Continuously charges the phone's battery; sophisticated circuitry conserves energy. It's designed for the most popular phones made by Motorola and Nokia and comes with an extension for SUV dashboards.

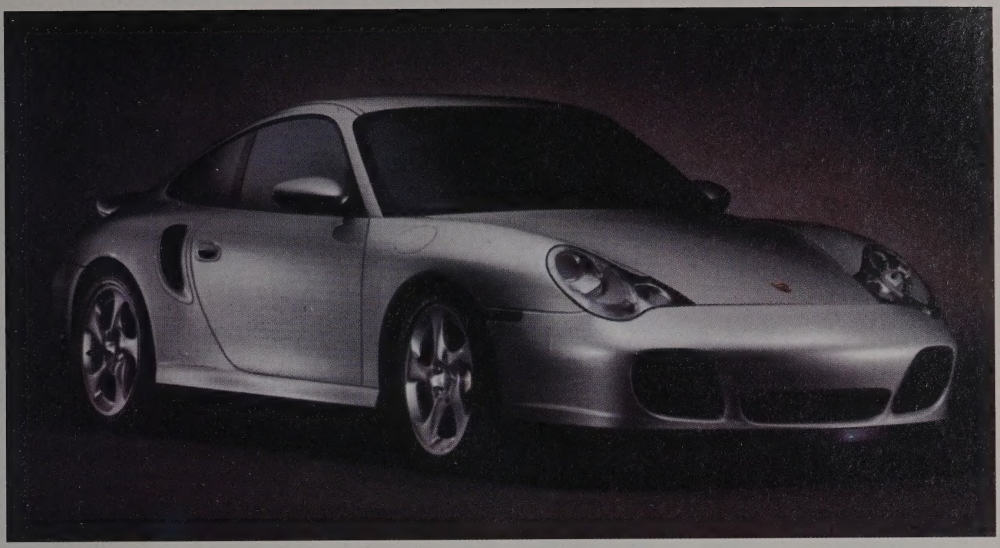
O.K.! It's time for your Quiz! Which of these 2001 models provides the "Vehicle Dynamics Control System" for unparalleld traction? Times up!

Subaru Outback Luxury in the Rough!

The Subaru Outback H6-3.0 VDC, larger and more versatile than previous models, offers exceptional driving performance and luxury. The Vehicle Dynamics Control System provides unparalleled traction and stability for driving through even the roughest terrain along with raised suspension for excellent ground clearance handling. The interior includes leather-trimmed upholstery and steering wheel, sunroof and AM/FM/Weatherband stereo cassette and single-disc CD player.

BMW The Driving Machine

Unless you've experienced the handling of the BMW, you cannot say that



you've experienced the ultimate. It's one of the most affordable luxury cars on the road, and one of the safest to drive. It contains a unique Head Protection System that helps reduce head injuries in collisions, All-Season Traction that allows you to drive in any weather condition, and Dynamic Stability Control for road-holding. Redesigned in the futuristic look of today the BMW 725i still maintains its legendary look and efficiency.

911 Turbo Porsche Don't Get Left Behind!

You're driving along, and suddenly the sleek, silvery glint of a Porsche speeds by like a bullet, the engine roaring like a panther. Few other cars have come to symbolize luxury and speed as well as the 911 Turbo Porsche. This year, realize that dream of having the most desired speed luxury automobile. Its twin turbochargers and water-cooled 3.6-liter flat-six engine and five-speed Tiptronic S transmission leave competitors behind. Its internally vented, cross-drilled brakes brings you to a standstill in 2.6 seconds. Hey, it's a Porsche. Enough said. V

Watch It!

FUBU has teamed up with Wittnauer International, the nation's oldest watchmaker to introduce The FUBU Swiss watch collection. The line offers a variety of styles for men and women including "Azure" the ultimate dress watch featuring stainless or gold bracelet and a mother of pearl, white or blue dial; "Buenos Aries" a gold-plated stainless steel or two-toned bracelet. The top of the line "Clous De Paris" dials with an optional diamond bezel. Other styles feature white or black textured dial with or without chronograph, Swiss automatic movement, power reserve, water resistance deployment clasp, three hand movement, date indicator, calendar and alarm.

Foot Discretions

Sharper Image Design's sophisticated new foot massager uses patented technology to silently circulate ion-rich air through openings under your toes. This cooling, drying breeze combined with soothing massage – offers wonderful relief for hot, tired, aching feet that are burning up with moist itching. The Foot Care Station turns on automatically when you rest your feet on the ergonomic massage nodes. Discreet, attractive and low profile, it fits anywhere – even under an office desk.

Quiet Power

72 of your ties glide quietly past you for easy selection. Touch the control bar to rotate left or right in one full revolution or press the Stop button when you've reached your selection. A bright light helps you see true colors, then switches off after rotation stops. Four double hooks underneath hold belts and scarves increasing the hanging spaces to 80.

Keep Pressing

A day's wear is all it takes to lose the look of crisp slacks – just back, freshly pressed, from the dry cleaners. Baggy knees and wrinkled rear? Oh, Hell No! Now you can forget the expense and inconvenience of constant trips to the cleaners. Instead, just plug in this English-made valet and press a button to give your pants a professional-style press – automatically – anytime you want. An exclusive stretcher bar system eases fabric back into shape, and thermostatically controlled heat loosens stubborn wrinkles.

The Pleasure of Business

Images: DeAlan Wilson
www.dealanphoto.com

Styling: Jerry Jordan-Brown
Hair/Make-up: Gerard Dure' for Gerard Dure' Salons
Models: Andrea Gould & David Randolph for 123 Entertainment Models & Talent Mgt.
Interior design: Jack Faxon

Andrea wears black crepe knit suit by Anne Klein $500. Camisole by Banana Republic $40. David wears blue suit courtesy Skylab by Drew Felton with Banana Republic tie $395.00.

David's white cotton shirt by Yves St. Laurent $69.00 with gray pants courtesy Skylab by Drew Felton & Banana Republic for $39.50. Andrea sports a two piece suit by Scott Pollard $450.00 with polkadot blouse by H&M $35.00.

BACK ISSUES

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Vol. 7 No. 1
Bisexuality
The Sweetest
Taboo

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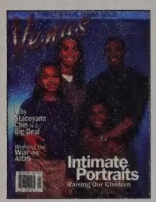
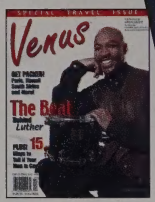


Vol. 6 No. 4
Family Issue
Raising Our
Children

Vol. 6 No. 3
Mary Wilson
Electon 2000



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Travel Issue

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Our Parents

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Mary & Lou

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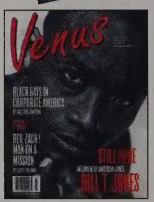
Venus Landin
Domestic
Violence



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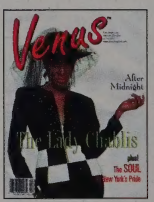
Bill T. Jones
Out at Work



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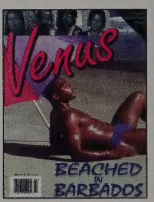
The Lady Chablis
After Midnight



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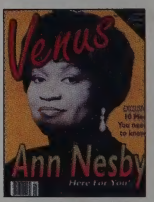
Beached in
Barbados



Vol. 3 No. 1
Ann Nesby
10 Important Men

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Andrea's brown tweed jacket by H&M $75.00 with plaid skirt by Scott Pollard $75.00 and blouse by Scott Pollard $50.00. David wears Skylab by Drew Felton with Banana Republic Tie $39.50

Madame Tussaud's New York Opens At Times Square

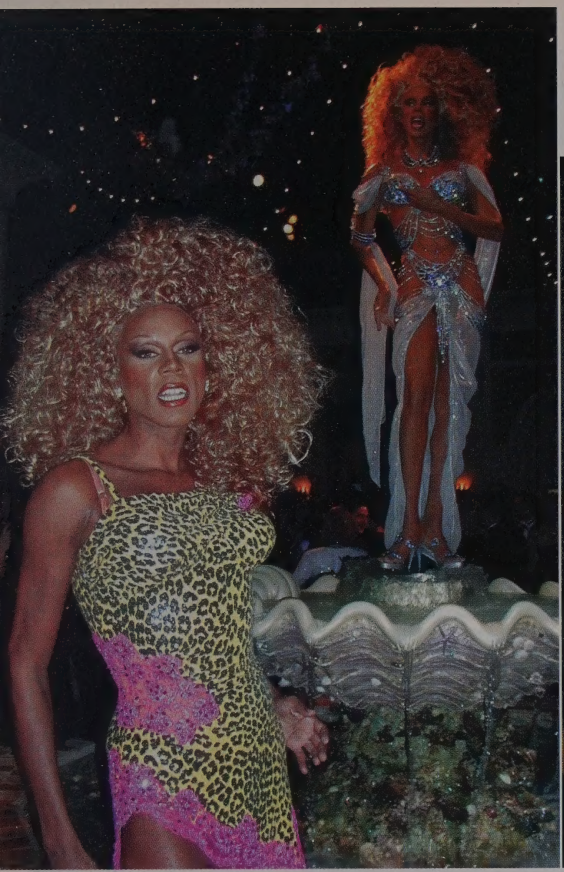
Barbara Lazaroff, Karem Abdul-Jabbr, Huey, Maya Angelou, and Donald Trump at Madame Tussaud's New York grand opening.

Madame Tussaud's New York is an impressive $50 million, 85,000 square foot, five-story interactive wax museum. Developed by London-based The Tussaud's Group, Ltd., it showcases remarkable wax likenesses of numerous celebrities whose names and faces are synonymous with New York, in addition to an impressive collection of the world's most reputed film, television, music, political, social, historical and sports celebrities.

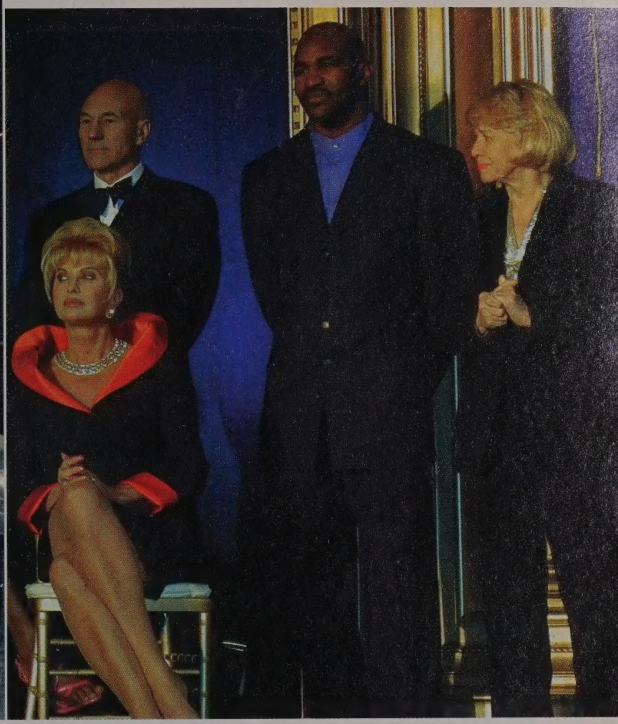
Following in the footsteps of the original Madame Tussaud's in London, there are no velvet ropes separating guests from the figures at Madame Tussaud's New York. Visitors enjoy a rare opportunity to interact with the famous as they mingle and pose for photographs with their favorite celebrities. Like other Madame Tussaud's attractions, Madame Tussaud's New York also takes on the "face of the place," presenting personalities who are synonymous with New York, in addition to those of worldwide fame. Notable New Yorkers included in the attraction are Woody Allen, Leonard Bernstein, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, John D. Rockefeller, Yoko Ono, Donald Trump, Andy Warhol, and RuPaul, among others.

Madame Tussaud's New York's striking exterior on 42nd Street, between 7th and 8th Avenues, sets the tone for the exciting experience that waits inside. The ten-story building is vibrant with color and dynamic in design. From the rooftop, a giant hand reaches out above the crowds, presenting from its fingertips a vertical Madame Tussaud's marquee that spans four stories. A glass-enclosed viewing platform, over an inviting atrium-style entrance allows the guests inside to enjoy the excitement of 42nd Street from two stories above.

Once inside, a stroll through Madame Tussaud's New York takes guests to "The Opening Night Party," an elaborate Italian baroque garden party already underway. Wax portraits of New York notables are gathered in eclectic combinations, waiting for



Photography by Tina Paul



RuPaul 'Works It ' for his admirers, live and in wax. (r) Ivana Trump, Patrick Stewart, Evander Holyfield, and Liz Smith were also on hand..

Broadway reviews and sharing the latest gossip with everyone from Brad Pitt, Bette Midler, Nicolas Cage and Hugh Grant, to Oprah Winfrey, John Travolta, Cybill Shepherd and Meryl Streep.

From the party, guests are taken back in time to the 18th century to learn "Madame Tussaud's Story," a 200-year history that depicts scenes from the French Revolution, the beheading of Marie Antoinette, and Napoleon's lover Josephine in prison.

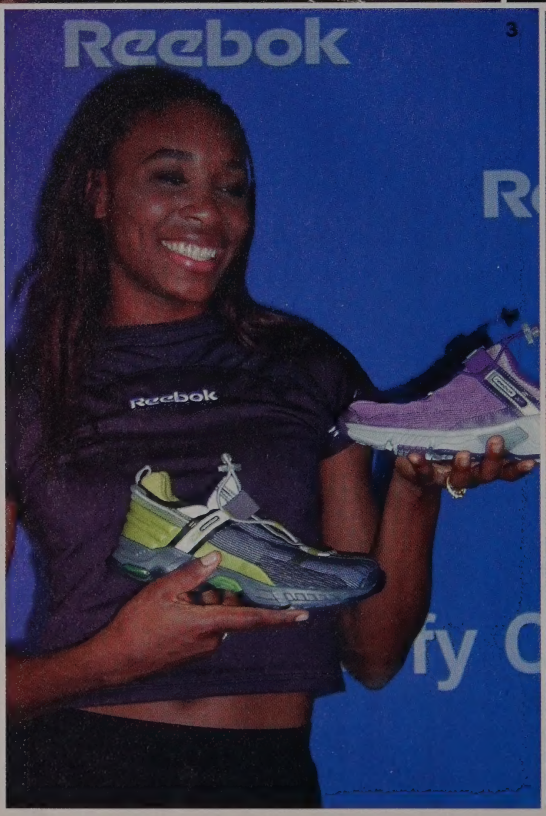
After a look into the past, guests go "Behind the Scenes" to learn the art of wax modeling, following the creation of Al Roker's clay likeness. This multimedia display features photos, video and equipment that demonstrate the painstaking methods and step-by-step processes used to create a wax portrait.

"The Gallery" puts guests face-to-face with some of the world's greatest leaders, including a showcase of American presidents and other honored and distinguished people whose lives and achievements have had a dramatic impact on our world. Portraits of The Dalai Lama, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Diana, Princess of Wales, are presented.

Next, visitors travel through time in "Popular Culture," which chronicles the key cultural influences through the decades and includes such trendsetters as Babe Ruth, Madonna, Bill Gates, Neil Armstrong and Frank Sinatra, all presented in decade-specific vignettes.

An additional attraction at Madame 'Tussaud's New York, "1t Happened in New York" is an immersive domed attraction which takes guests on a magical midnight ride via a virtual Hansom cab to experience major events and moments which celebrate the city's illustrious history.

Open daily, admission to the Madame Tussaud's combined experience (including the wax museum and "It Happened in New York") is $19.95 for adults and children over 12. More information may be obtained online at www.madame-tussauds.com. _CEC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Foundation for Cancer Research

Soultry Sisters

Kathy, Debbie, and Kim Sledge of Sister Sledge, add a triple touch of glamour to the G&P Foundation Gala in New Yor last fall.

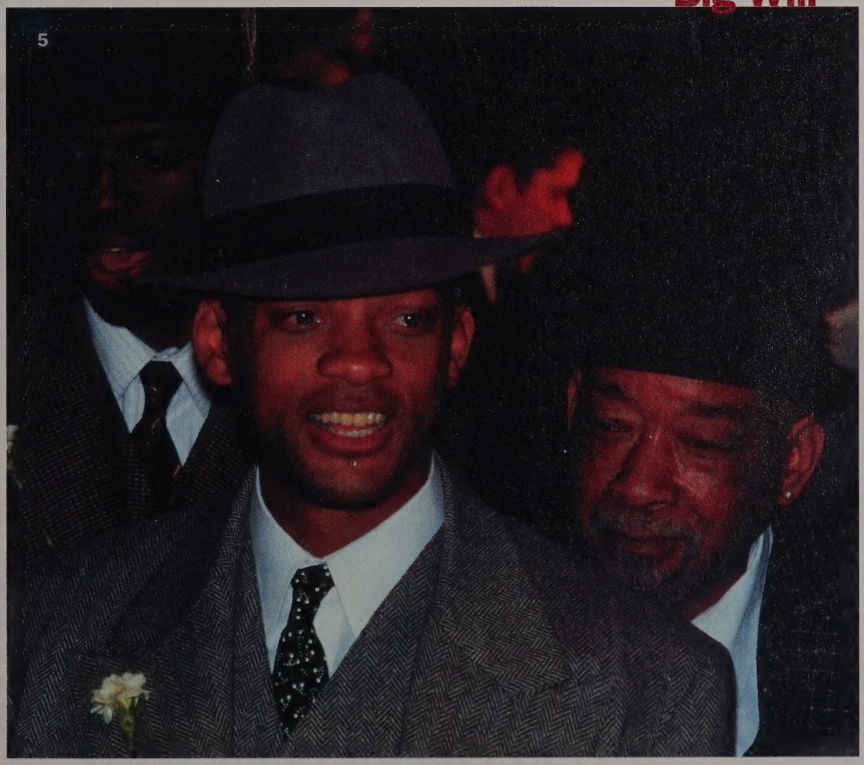
Dazzling classic R&B trio, Kathy, Debbie, and Kim Sledge, Sister Sledge, were among guests invited to honor Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordon, Mikhail Gorbachev and Sir Paul McCartney at the G&P Foundation's gala in New York City last fall. The Sisters are currently touring the UK and the US giving incredible performances which include their unforgettable 1# hit "We Are Family." The group will soon release their first Gospel CD. Sister Joni is busy launching a new television network and preparing to tour with a play that was inspired by a song Joni wrote entitled "Brother Brother Stop." Kathy is working with Crystal Waters on an upcoming dance single. If staying busy keeps you young, these ladies may live for ever! V

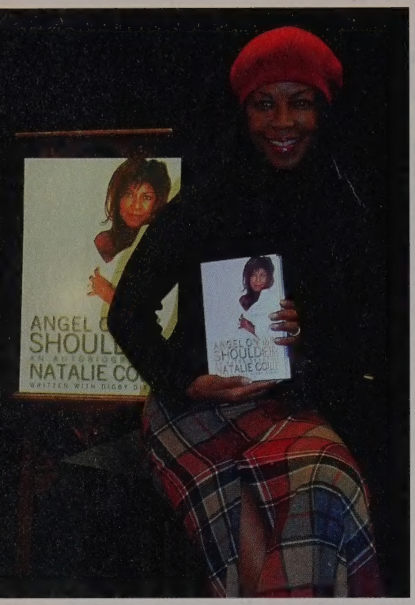
- Nigel Jackson

Big Will

Photography by Tina Paul

1. The harmonious trinity, Fate, exudes a radiant glow at the Michael Awards in NYC.
2. Radio personality, Chaz, moves in for a close-up with Quincy Jones at the Lena Horne Awards.
3. Tennis Queen, Venus Williams, decides which NIKE shoe to wear first, now that she's landed the highest paid sport endorsement contract ever by a woman.
4. Star Jones is a symphony in red at The Angel Ball.
5. The debonair Will Smith and his dad are a sartorial delight at the world premier of his latest film, "The Legend of Baggar Vance."





Natalie Cole stopped by a local New York City bookstore to autograph copies of "An Angel on My shoulder: An autobiography of Natlie Cole".

"Walker compares her experiences to the classic film, Imitation of Life. The spectrum of events that shaped her youth reveals her relationship with her family."

Black White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self

by Rebecca Walker, Riverhead Books, ISBN: 1-572322-169-4
Review by Maurice Patterson

Rebecca Walker has meticulously combed her life and honestly recounts it in *Black White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self.* Born to a Jewish father and black mother, she fought breathlessly to find a sense of self as a biracial youth. Her ever-evolving quest has been a wanderlust to satisfy the desires of her soul.

Like an expert cartographer, Walker has vividly mapped out her life. After her parents separated, her nomadic youth led her across cities and towns where she occasionally found residence with relatives and loved ones. However, life became increasingly chaotic with no stable home and did little to establish her identity. Walker compares her experiences to the classic film, *Imitation of Life.* The spectrum of events that shaped her youth reveals her relationship with her family and the self she tried to cohere in an ever-changing world.

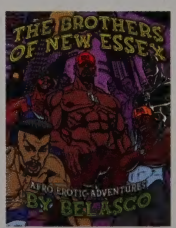
Walker describes the period when her mother, the novelist Alice Walker's nascent career began to blossom as a time of limited togetherness. At this time, her father was also busy with his practice as a lawyer--and a new white wife. In this personal time, Walker reveals intimate details, including the painful reality of having an abortion at fourteen. She is equally honest about her experiences with boys and the feelings and thoughts she treasured for girls.

The enigmas of self and identity are still real and poignant today. But Walker moves on despite the tribulations of her life. Her broken chrysalis has revealed the beauty of a breathtaking metamorphosis.

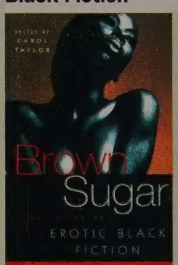
The Brothers of New Essex

by Belasco, Cleis Press, ISBN: 1-57344-111-2

In the edgy, fantasy city of New Essex, beautiful. muscular Black men flirt and have sex with each other. *The Brothers of New Essex* is Belasco's first book-sized collection of his erotic comics. Part of what he has done is created two recurring characters who are prominently featured in Brothers; Boo, a strong, silent man of mystery and Oasis, a trash-talking college student who strips to pay the bills. In the first of the Boo series, created for the now defunct GBM magazine, Boo seduces a young man out of church, then has sex with him just under one of its windows as the choir is singing. "That's as taboo as one can get," say Graylin Thornton, who was GBM's edior. In an interview with the San Francisco Frontier, Belsco abmits being excited about having his work more widely available than his self-published 'zines and magazine work but is less enthusiatic about the prospect of giving up his privacy. "Once you start publishing, you get an addiction," he says. "I'm kind of apprehensive. I like being anonymous."



Brown Sugar
A Collection of Erotic Black Fiction



Edited by Carol Taylor Plume ISBN: 0452282241

This stylish anthology of original black erotica, edited by long time publishing professional, Carol Taylor, includes stories by nineteen authors including poet Sapphire, Reginald Harris, Pamela Sneed, Marcia Blackman, and Leone Ross's "Drag," whose 18-year-old narrator announces, "Today I feel like a drag queen," and proceeds to pick up a man outside a porn shop and ask him to have sex with her "like I'm a boy."

TINA PAUL

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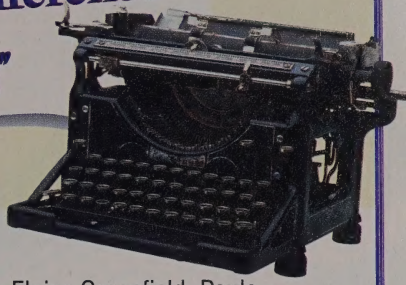

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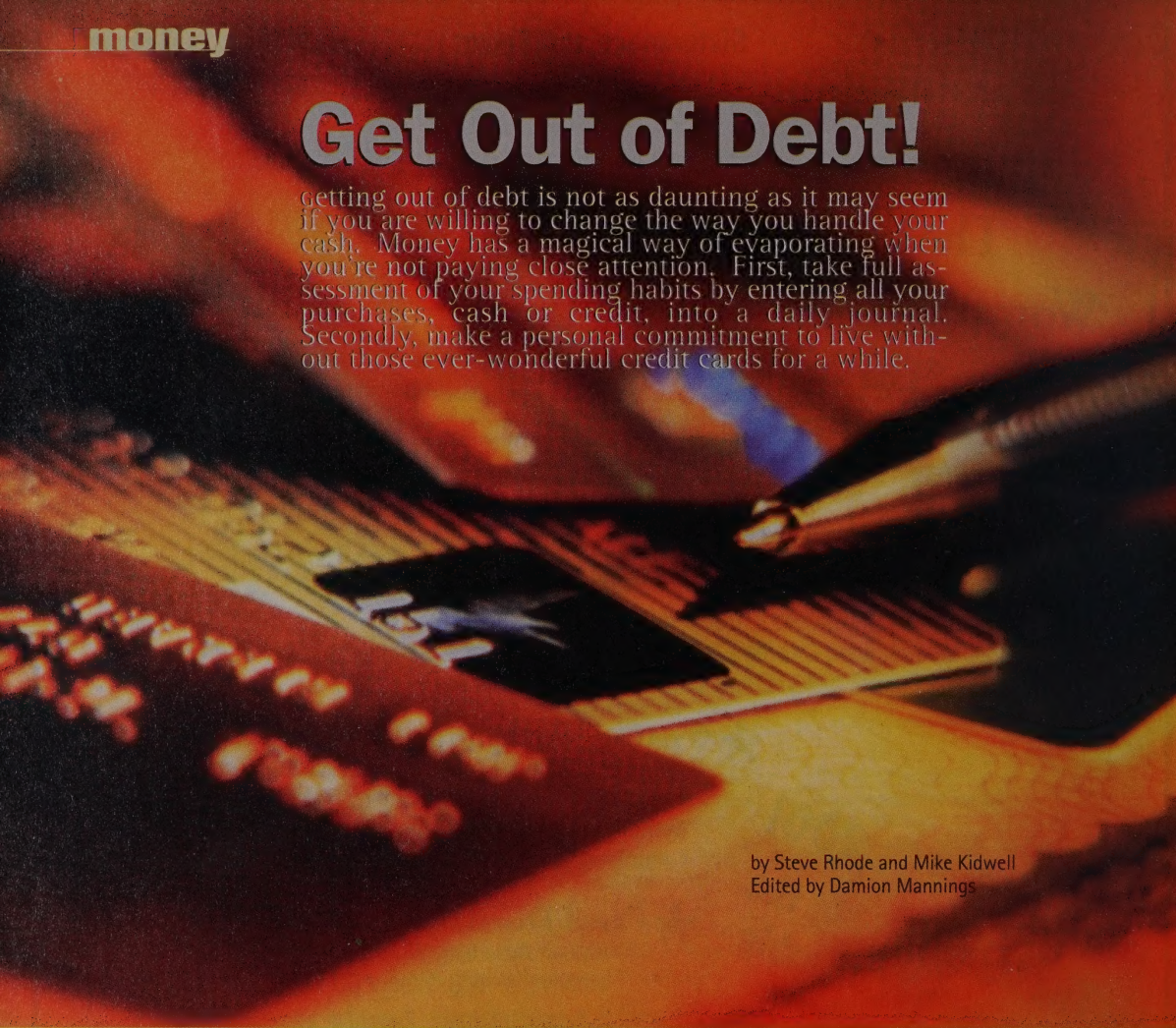
Get Out of Debt!

getting out of debt is not as daunting as it may seem if you are willing to change the way you handle your cash. Money has a magical way of evaporating when you're not paying close attention. First, take full assessment of your spending habits by entering all your purchases, cash or credit, into a daily journal. Secondly, make a personal commitment to live without those ever-wonderful credit cards for a while.



by Steve Rhode and Mike Kidwell
Edited by Damion Mannings

As you continue to pay off credit balances, remember to never pay only the minimum balance unless, of course, you enjoy accruing additional interest charges. Third, reevaluate your budget. It may be time to create a new 'stream-line' version eliminating a few luxury expenditures until a financial goal is reached. For example, no new clothing until Master Card is paid down to $"X". This will effectively motivate you pay down your debts as you continue to window shop for your next Killer outfit. Always arrange a schedule so that creditors receive your payments on time. If you fall behind, don't fret and don't be embarrassed to get help. There are many non-profit organizations that can get you back on track. Prior to calling, make a list of all your creditors and the amount you owe, including interest rates and late fees. Once you've committed to their program, don't forget to request monthly statements. You definitely want to be sure your balances are being paid in accordance to the agreement. Gradually, you'll be on a better path to financial freedom.

Q: I am seriously considering bankruptcy due to heavy credit card debts. My partner is urging me to file bankruptcy, but I am reluctant. How can I contact these credit card companies myself to negotiate reduced interest payments before I decide to take the final step and file? Can I do it on my own?

A: It can be difficult to negotiate reduced payments and interest on your own. Creditors are afraid that if they give you lower payments, other creditors may insist on full payments and get more of your money! That's why it is best to work with a non-profit counseling agency. These agencies have agreements with creditors to reduce payments, interest and/or fees, and creditors know that their payments will be distributed fairly. If you only have one or two creditors to negotiate with, you may have success on your own. A couple of warnings are in order, though: Get any agreements in writing, and understand that even if you make the new lower payments on time, you may be reported as late to the credit reporting agencies. If your new minimum monthly payment is less that 90% of your regular payment it will not prevent your account from becoming further past due each month. Once your credit card account become 180 past due the creditor may charge off your account, but can continue collections activity. Also, if you settle a debtor for less than you owe, the IRS may consider the amount that is forgiven to be income, and will expect you to pay income tax on it.

Q: My husband and I filed for bankruptcy two years ago. When my sister recently got a copy of her credit report for herself, my bankruptcy was listed as hers. (She never filed for bankruptcy). I am not happy that she got that information, and am wondering what liability the credit reporting agency has, as this is something that I consider confidential.

A: Before you react aggressively consider these facts, if your sister has a name which is similar to yours, it may not be unreasonable that the information was reported incorrectly. Additionally, if you had any joint accounts with your sister which were included in the bankruptcy, that might cause the bankruptcy to appear on her credit report. Under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), credit reporting agencies are required to establish "reasonable procedures to ensure accuracy." But as you've learned, mistakes happen, and sometimes they can be serious. You should file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, Credit Practices Division, Washington DC 20580. Your only recourse, however, would be to sue the credit reporting agency. We have to warn you: these suits are often difficult, expensive and hard to win. Cases have gone both ways on these issues.

Generally, a consumer can sue an agency for either "willfully" or "negligently" failing to comply with the law. In the case of willful noncompliance, you can sue for an amount equal to actual damages (between $100 and $1,000), attorney's fees and punitive damages. But you have to show that the credit bureau willfully failed to comply with the law.

In the case of negligent noncompliance, you can sue only for actual damages plus attorney's fees. These types of lawsuits aim to show that credit bureaus don't have reasonable procedures in place to ensure compliance with the law, or that an employee fails to follow them.

Consumers who have filed for bankruptcy tell us that they often fear their friends, families or employers will find out about it. As you've learned, it's possible they will.

Do you have a question about credit or debt? Send it to: Myvesta.org Questions, P.O. Box 8587, Gaithersburg, MD 20898-8587 or by e-mail to: questions@myvesta.org. Steve Rhode is autor of *Out Of Debt: Smart Solutions To Your Money Problems.*

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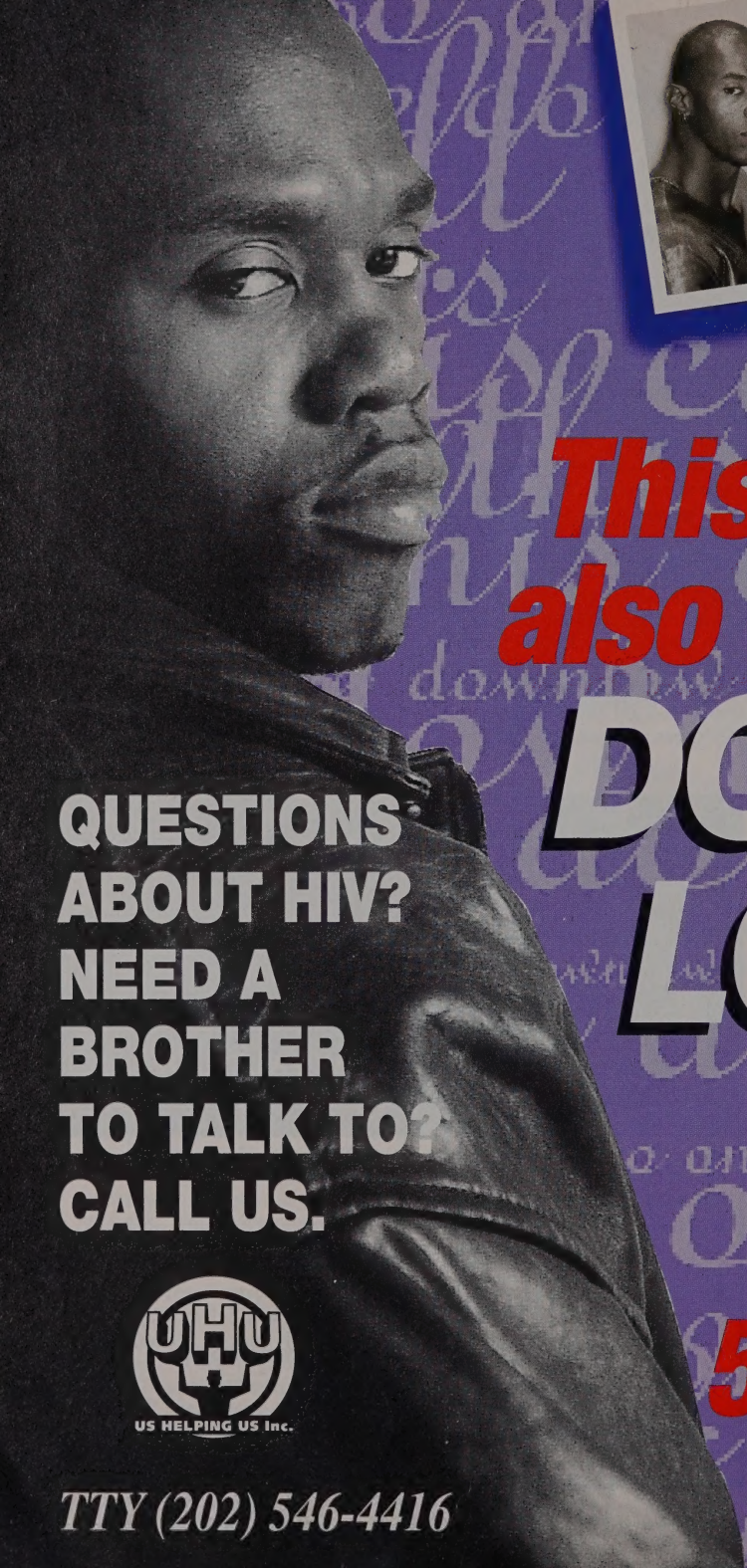

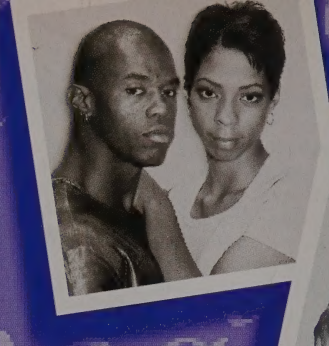

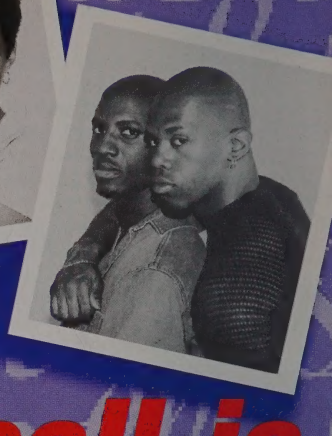

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Sex Talk

by Geanie Bond

Q&A

Q. My partner and I have been in a long-term relationship and I would like to know how to negotiate sexual acts that I am not comfortable with.

Dear Uncomfortable;

With care and gentleness.

That you and your partner are in a long-term relationship, may suggest a certain level of comfort with the person. This will allow, hopefully, for the kind of patience and consideration that is needed, as well as an atmosphere that is open for exploration.

You and your partner might allow yourselves, during a relaxed time, outside of the bedroom, to talk about your sexual fantasies, your desires, as well as any reluctance or discomfort surrounding these desires. Your partner will need to know your fears and anxieties in order to help you through them.

Tell your partner what might relax you, as you try on this newness. It might be foreplay, music, low lights, scented oils, your partner's voice talking and encouraging you, gently and softly.

When you and your partner have discussed this, thoroughly, and he/she is apprised of your desires for comfort, then whenever the two of you, spontaneously, want to go forward, you may.

It is important, while in the sexual arena, that your partner is in tune to your "body signals". For example, if your body tightens, your mate should proceed more slowly, and incorporate the methods you have, previously, suggested for relaxation. It is, also, important for your partner to inquire and seek permission to proceed. During these times, you might take deep breaths and focus on the pleasure between the two of you. You might even develop a tender touch between the two of you that would signal your partner when to stop, slow, or proceed.

"As you become more relaxed, your partner will know this by your muscle tone, your breathing, heart rate, and by all means, talk with one another."

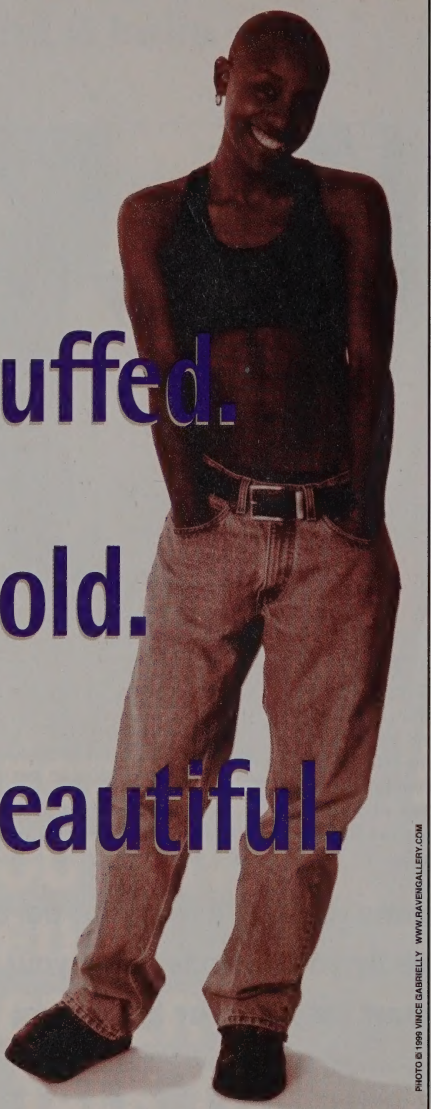
As you become more relaxed, your partner will know this by your muscle tone, your breathing, heart rate, and by all means, talk with one another.

It is important to remember two things; As long as it is not psychologically or physically damaging, two people, certainly, have the right to agree to their hearts' delight, on most acts, within the privacy of their bedroom. Secondly, any act that you feel you are morally against, or just don't feel you can be a participant; should not be a part of your repertoire.

This is psychologically damaging to you, as an individual; and to your relationship, in general.

Should your partner pressure you to carry-out certain sexual acts, your issue is not the sexual acts, ------it is the relationship. Be loving, be gentle, be patient and caring toward each other. You are both attempting to expand your sexual horizons for the mutual pleasuring and deepening of the relationship. V

Geanie Bond is a licensed marriage and family therapist specializing in hypnosis and sex therapy. Send questions to SexTalk@venusmagazine.com



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The i-Phone $399.00 By Big Planet, model shown is #2050. Purchase through The Empowerment Network Business Center 718-655-4730, ask for Cecile Jackson or Visit www.theempowermentnetwork.org or www.bigplanet.com.

The Swopper Chair www.swopper.com

EventsCalendar

April 12-15, 2001 National Black Lesbian Conference Swissotel, Atlanta, GA, Register online at www.zunainstitue.org or call 510-482-1671 or 770-592-0673.

April 16, 2001 12th Annual GLAAD Media Awards presented by Absolut Vodka. the awards will take place in four ceremonies to be held in New York City on April 16th, in Los Angeles on April 28th, in Washington , D.C. on May 12th, and in San Francisco on June 9th. For tickets visit www.glaad.org.

April 19, 2001 9th International Gay & Lesbian World Travel Expo, NYC, Thurs. Metropolitan Pavilion, Chelsea 110 W. 19th St., btwn 6/7 Ave. 4-6 pm

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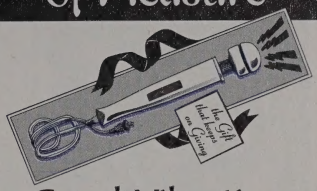

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Bayard Taylor Rustin, 1912-1987

Bayard Rustin & Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the home of Dr. Arthur C. Logan in 1962. Photographer unknown, courtesy of The Bayard Rustin Fund, Inc.

"Rustin worked to establish a social order in which love, as demonstrated preeminently in the life of Jesus, shall be the motivating force."

–Bayard Rustin

Sings Twelve Spirituals On the Life of Christ.

As a young man, Bayard Rustin was told many times that he might have a career as a professional singer. Rustin did sing with noted folk singer Josh White and Leadbelly and even made an album of spirituals. But a career in music lost out to a lifetime of service in civil and human rights.

Since his college days at Wilberforce and Cheyney State Teachers College, Rustin devoted his life to the struggle for racial and world brotherhood as befits a young man brought up by a Quaker grandmother. In 1941, he joined the staff of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, an organization of people in more than a score of countries who repudiate violence as a means of settling international or inter-group conflicts.

In this capacity, Bayard Rustin traveled back and forth across the United States, Europe and India, expounding the doctrine of nonviolent goodwill, demonstrating Ghandian technique of noncooperation with evil and enthralling audiences with his music.

Although Rustin was one of the most important leaders of the American civil rights movement from the advent of its modern period in the 1950s until well into the 1980s, his name was seldom mentioned. He received comparatively little press or media attention. His was a behind-the-scenes role that, for all its importance, never garnered Rustin the public acclaim he deserved.

It was Rustin who provided Dr. Martin Luther King with some practical advice on how to apply Gandhian principles of nonviolence to the boycott of public transportation, then taking shape in Montgomery. By all accounts it was Rustin who was the chief architect of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom which took place on August 28, 1963. It was the high point of a life that had seen him sent to prison for draft resistance and arrested for public indecency in Pasadena, Calif., in 1953. That arrest was the first time that Rustic's homosexuality had come into public attention. At that time homosexual behavior in all states was a criminal offense.

Although the gay rights movement in the United States was still many years in the future, Rustin's conviction and his relatively open attitude about his homosexuality set the stage for him to become an elder gay icon in the decades to come. V

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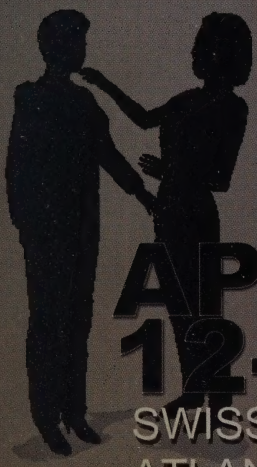

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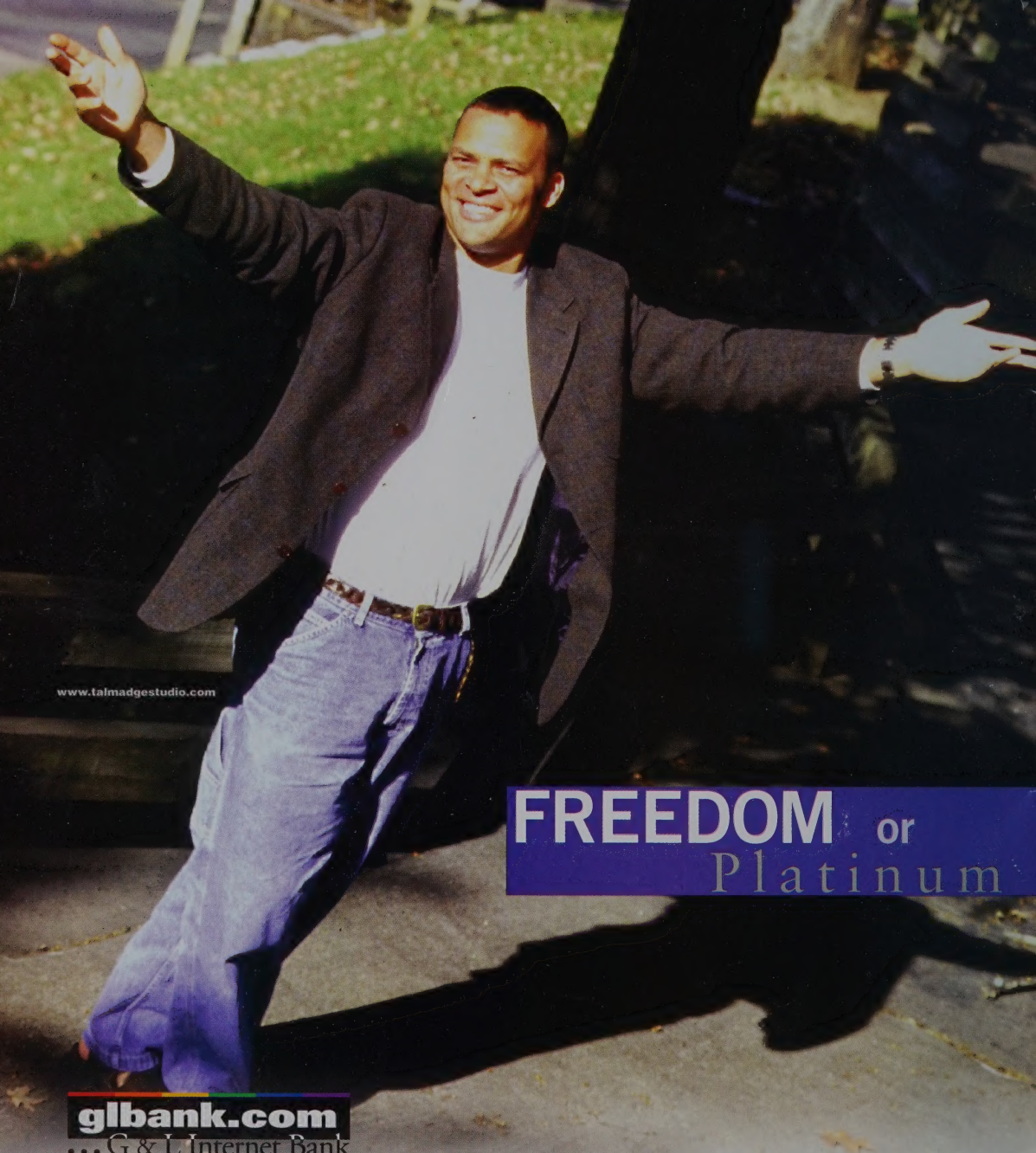

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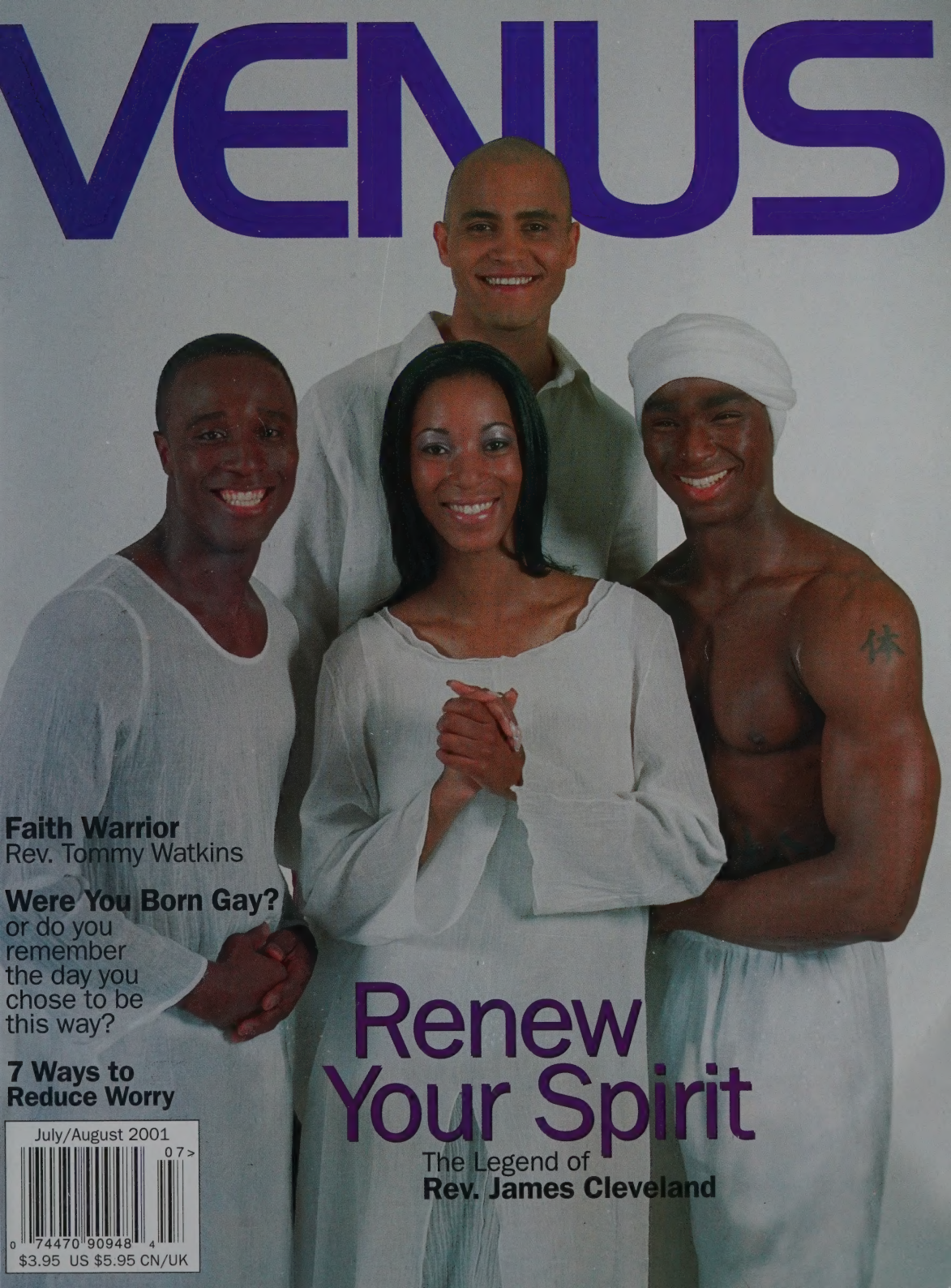

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Third edition

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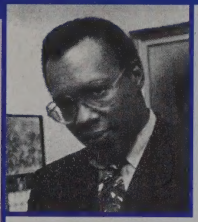
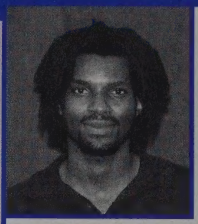


"Information is power. I support the efforts of Cothran Publications to disseminate health information to the African American community. It is now our responsibility to use this information, take action, educate ourselves and pass it on."

Dr. Stephen B. Thomas,
Emory University



"I've never found a resource that packs so much useful information into a concise guide. And it doesn't just stop at AIDS prevention. Need a primer on women's health issues? The Pocket Guide has got it covered by providing addresses, numbers and contacts in your neck of the 'hood."

LeRoy Whitfield,
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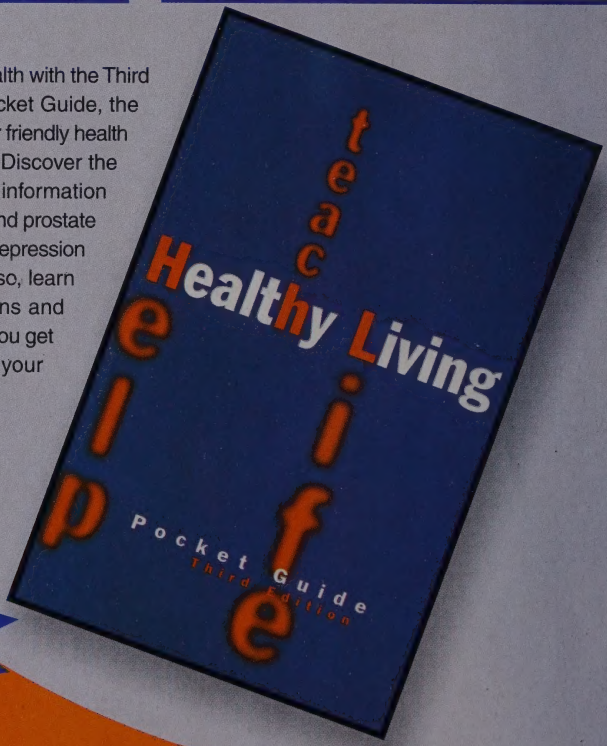
Share our commitment to good health with the Third Edition of the Healthy Living Pocket Guide, the most informative, concise and user friendly health guide for African Americans today. Discover the very latest prevention & treatment information about HIV/AIDS, breast, cervical and prostate cancers, heart health, hepatitis, depression and addictions, and more! Also, learn how to contact organizations and individuals who can help you get involved in improving your health.



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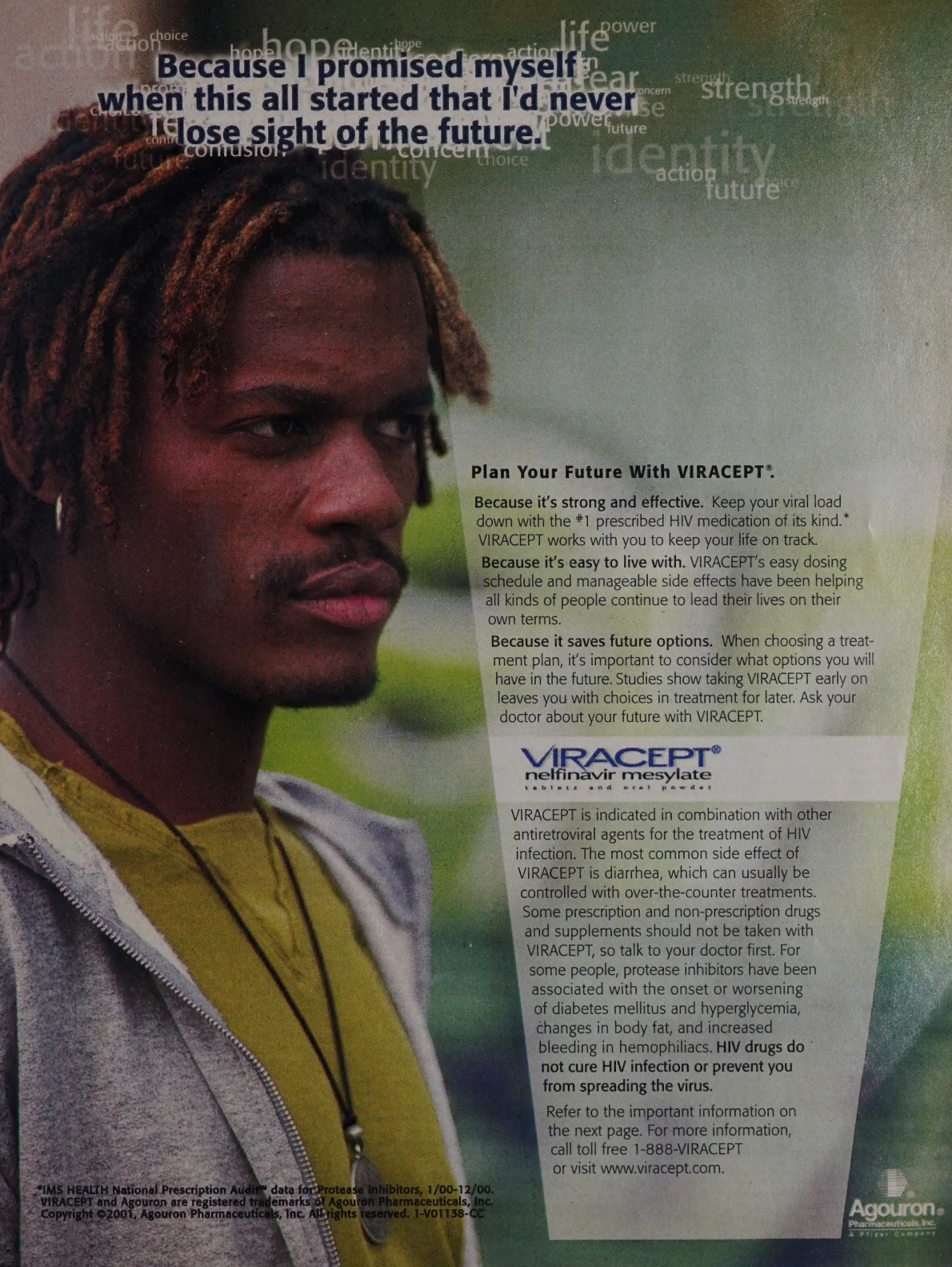

Plan Your Future With VIRACEPT®.

Because it's strong and effective. Keep your viral load down with the #1 prescribed HIV medication of its kind.* VIRACEPT works with you to keep your life on track.

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Because it saves future options. When choosing a treatment plan, it's important to consider what options you will have in the future. Studies show taking VIRACEPT early on leaves you with choices in treatment for later. Ask your doctor about your future with VIRACEPT.

VIRACEPT®
nelfinavir mesylate
tablets and oral powder

VIRACEPT is indicated in combination with other antiretroviral agents for the treatment of HIV infection. The most common side effect of VIRACEPT is diarrhea, which can usually be controlled with over-the-counter treatments. Some prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplements should not be taken with VIRACEPT, so talk to your doctor first. For some people, protease inhibitors have been associated with the onset or worsening of diabetes mellitus and hyperglycemia, changes in body fat, and increased bleeding in hemophiliacs. **HIV drugs do not cure HIV infection or prevent you from spreading the virus.**

Refer to the important information on the next page. For more information, call toll free 1-888-VIRACEPT or visit www.viracept.com.

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VIRACEPT®

(nelfinavir mesylate)

Tablets and Oral Powder

Information for Patients

about VIRACEPT® (VI-ra-cept)

Generic Name: nelfinavir (nel-FIN-na-veer) mesylate

For the Treatment of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) Infection

Please read this information carefully before taking VIRACEPT. Also, please read this leaflet each time you renew the prescription, just in case anything has changed. This is a summary and not a replacement for a careful discussion with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIRACEPT when you start taking this medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when taking VIRACEPT and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

Alert: Find out about medicines that should NOT be taken with VIRACEPT. Please also read the section "MEDICINES YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE WITH VIRACEPT".

WHAT IS VIRACEPT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

VIRACEPT is used in combination with other antiretroviral drugs in the treatment of people with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection. Infection with HIV leads to the destruction of CD4 T cells, which are important to the immune system. After a large number of CD4 cells have been destroyed, the infected person develops acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS).

VIRACEPT works by blocking HIV protease (a protein-cutting enzyme), which is required for HIV to multiply. VIRACEPT has been shown to significantly reduce the amount of HIV in the blood. Although VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, VIRACEPT can help reduce your risk for death and illness associated with HIV. Patients who took VIRACEPT also had significant increases in the number of CD4 cell count.

VIRACEPT should be taken together with other antiretroviral drugs such as Retrovir® (zidovudine, AZT), Epivir® (lamivudine, 3TC), or Zerit® (stavudine, d4T). Taking VIRACEPT in combination with other antiretroviral drugs reduces the amount of HIV in the body (viral load) and raises CD4 counts.

VIRACEPT may be taken by adults, adolescents, and children 2 years of age or older. Studies in infants younger than 2 years of age are now taking place.

DOES VIRACEPT CURE HIV OR AIDS?

VIRACEPT is not a cure for HIV infection or AIDS. People taking VIRACEPT may still develop opportunistic infections or other conditions associated with HIV infection. Some of these conditions are pneumonia, herpes virus infections, *Mycobacterium avium* complex (MAC) infections, and Kaposi's sarcoma.

There is no proof that VIRACEPT can reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

WHO SHOULD OR SHOULD NOT TAKE VIRACEPT?

Together with your doctor, you need to decide whether VIRACEPT is appropriate for you. In making your decision, the following should be considered:

Allergies: If you have had a serious allergic reaction to VIRACEPT, you must not take VIRACEPT. You should also inform your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist of any known allergies to substances such as other medicines, foods, preservatives, or dyes.

If you are pregnant: The effects of VIRACEPT on pregnant women or their unborn babies are not known. If you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

If you are breast-feeding: You should discuss with your doctor the best way to feed your baby. You should be aware that if your baby does not already have HIV, there is a chance that it can be transmitted through breast-feeding. **Women should not breast-feed if they have HIV.**

Children: VIRACEPT is available for the treatment of children 2 through 13 years of age with HIV. There is a powder form of VIRACEPT that can be mixed with milk, baby formula, or foods like pudding. Instructions on how to take VIRACEPT powder can be found in a later section that discusses how VIRACEPT Oral Powder should be prepared.

If you have liver disease: VIRACEPT has not been studied in people with liver disease. If you have liver disease, you should tell your doctor before taking VIRACEPT.

Other medical problems: Certain medical problems may affect the use of VIRACEPT. Some people taking protease inhibitors have developed new or more serious diabetes or high blood sugar. Some people with hemophilia have had increased bleeding. It is not known whether the protease inhibitors caused these problems. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have hemophilia types A and B, diabetes mellitus, or an increase in thirst and/or frequent urination.

Changes in body fat have been seen in some patients taking protease inhibitors. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the trunk. Loss of fat from the face, legs and arms may also happen. The cause and long-term health effects of these conditions are not known at this time.

CAN VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER MEDICATIONS?

VIRACEPT may interact with other drugs, including those you take without a prescription. You must discuss with your doctor any drugs that you are taking or are planning to take before you take VIRACEPT.

Medicines you should <u>not</u> take with VIRACEPT:

Propulsid® (cisapride, for heartburn)

Cordarone® (amiodarone, for irregular heartbeat)

Quinidine (for irregular heartbeat), also known as Quinaglute®, Cardioquin®, Quinidex®, and others

Ergot derivatives (Cafergot® and others, for migraine headache)

Halcion® (triazolam)

Versed® (midazolam)

Mevacor® (lovastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

Zocor® (simvastatin, for cholesterol lowering)

Taking the above drugs with VIRACEPT may cause serious and/or life-threatening adverse events.

Rifampin® (for tuberculosis), also known as Rimactane®, Rifadin®, Rifater®, or Rifamate®
This drug reduces blood levels of VIRACEPT.

Dose reduction required if you take VIRACEPT with: Mycobutin® (rifabutin, for MAC); you will need to take a lower dose of Mycobutin.

A change of therapy should be considered if you are taking VIRACEPT with:

Phenobarbital

Phenytoin (Dilantin® and others)

Carbamazepine (Tegretol® and others)

These agents may reduce the amount of VIRACEPT in your blood and make it less effective.

Oral contraceptives ("the pill")

If you are taking the pill to prevent pregnancy, you should use a different type of contraception since VIRACEPT may reduce the effectiveness of oral contraceptives.

Special considerations

Before you take Viagra® (sildenafil) with VIRACEPT, talk to your doctor about possible drug interactions and side effects. If you take Viagra and VIRACEPT together, you may be at increased risk of side effects of Viagra such as low blood pressure, visual changes, and penile erection lasting more than 4 hours. If an erection lasts longer than 4 hours, you should seek immediate medical assistance to avoid permanent damage to your penis. Your doctor can explain these symptoms to you.

It is not recommended to take VIRACEPT with the cholesterol-lowering drugs Mevacor® (lovastatin) or Zocor® (simvastatin) because of possible drug interactions. There is also an increased risk of drug interactions between VIRACEPT and Lipitor® (atorvastatin) and Baycol® (cerivastatin); talk to your doctor before you take either of these cholesterol reducing drugs with VIRACEPT.

Taking St. John's wort (hypericum perforatum), an herbal product sold as a dietary supplement, or products containing St. John's wort with VIRACEPT is not recommended. Talk with your doctor if you are taking or are planning to take St. John's wort. Taking St. John's wort may decrease VIRACEPT levels and lead to increased viral load and possible resistance to VIRACEPT or cross resistance to other antiretroviral drugs.

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE TAKEN WITH OTHER ANTI-HIV DRUGS?

Taking VIRACEPT together with other anti-HIV drugs increases their ability to fight the virus. It also reduces the opportunity for resistant viruses to grow. Based on your history of taking other anti-HIV medicine, your doctor will direct you on how to take VIRACEPT and other anti-HIV medicines. These drugs should be taken in a certain order or at specific times. This will depend on how many times a day each medicine should be taken. It will also depend on whether it should be taken with or without food.

Nucleoside analogues: No drug interaction problems were seen when VIRACEPT was given with:

Retrovir (zidovudine, AZT)

Epivir (lamivudine, 3TC)

Zerit (stavudine, d4T)

Videx® (didanosine, ddI)

If you are taking both Videx (ddI) and VIRACEPT:
Videx should be taken without food, on an empty stomach. Therefore, you should take VIRACEPT with food one hour after or more than two hours before you take Videx.

Nonnucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors (NNRTIs):

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Viramune® (nevirapine)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood is unchanged. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Viramune.

Sustiva™ (efavirenz)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. A dose adjustment is not needed when VIRACEPT is used with Sustiva.

Other NNRTIs

VIRACEPT has not been studied with other NNRTIs.

Other protease inhibitors:

When VIRACEPT is taken together with:

Crixivan® (indinavir)

The amount of both drugs in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Norvir™ (ritonavir)

The amount of VIRACEPT in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

Invirase® (saquinavir)

The amount of saquinavir in your blood may be increased. Currently, there are no safety and efficacy data available from the use of this combination.

WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF VIRACEPT?

Like all medicines, VIRACEPT can cause side effects. Most of the side effects experienced with VIRACEPT have been mild to moderate. Diarrhea is the most common side effect in people taking VIRACEPT, and most adult patients had at least mild diarrhea at some point during treatment. In clinical studies, about 15-20% of patients receiving VIRACEPT 750 mg (three tablets) three times daily or 1250 mg (five tablets) two times daily had four or more loose stools a day. In most cases, diarrhea can be controlled using antidiarrheal medicines, such as Imodium® A-D (loperamide) and others, which are available without a prescription.

Other side effects that occurred in 2% or more of patients receiving VIRACEPT include nausea, gas and rash.

There were other side effects noted in clinical studies that occurred in less than 2% of patients receiving VIRACEPT. However, these side effects may have been due to other drugs that patients were taking or to the illness itself. Except for diarrhea, there were not many differences in side effects in patients who took VIRACEPT along with other drugs compared with those who took only the other drugs. For a complete list of side effects, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE VIRACEPT?

VIRACEPT is available only with your doctor's prescription. Your doctor may prescribe the light blue VIRACEPT Tablets either as 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or as 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. VIRACEPT should always be taken with a meal or a light snack. VIRACEPT tablets are film-coated to help make the tablets easier to swallow.

Take VIRACEPT exactly as directed by your doctor. Do not increase or decrease any dose or the number of doses per day. Also, take this medicine for the exact period of time that your doctor has instructed. **Do not stop taking VIRACEPT without first consulting with your doctor, even if you are feeling better.**

Only take medicine that has been prescribed specifically for you. Do not give VIRACEPT to others or take medicine prescribed for someone else.

The dosing of VIRACEPT may be different for you than for other patients. **Follow the directions from your doctor, exactly as written on the label.** The amount of VIRACEPT in the blood should remain somewhat consistent over time. Missing doses will cause the concentration of VIRACEPT to decrease; therefore, **you should not miss any doses.** However, if you miss a dose, you should take the dose as soon as possible and then take your next scheduled dose and future doses as originally scheduled.

Dosing in adults (including children 14 years of age and older)

The recommended adult dose of VIRACEPT is 1250 mg (five tablets) taken two times a day or 750 mg (three tablets) taken three times a day. Each dose should be taken with a meal or light snack.

Dosing in children 2 to 13 years of age

The VIRACEPT dose in children depends on their weight. The recommended dose is 20 to 30 mg/kg (or 9 to 14 mg/pound) per dose, taken three times daily with a meal or light snack. This can be administered either in tablet form or, in children unable to take tablets, as VIRACEPT Oral Powder.

Dose instructions will be provided by the child's doctor. The dose will be given three times daily using the measuring scoop provided, a measuring teaspoon, or one or more tablets depending on the weight and age of the child. The amount of oral powder or tablets to be given to a child is described in the chart below.

Pediatric Dose to Be Administered Three Times Daily

Body Weight		Number of Level Scoops*	Number of Level Teaspoons†	Number of Tablets
Kg	Lb			
7 to <8.5	15.5 to <18.5	4	1	—
8.5 to <10.5	18.5 to <23	5	1 1/4	—
10.5 to <12	23 to <26.5	6	1 1/2	—
12 to <14	26.5 to <31	7	1 3/4	—
14 to <16	31 to <35	8	2	—
16 to <18	35 to <39.5	9	2 1/4	—
18 to <23	39.5 to <50.5	10	2 1/2	2
≥23	≥50.5	15	3 3/4	3

In measuring oral powder, the scoop or teaspoon should be level.

* 1 level scoop contains 50 mg of VIRACEPT. Use only the scoop provided with your VIRACEPT bottle.

† 1 level teaspoon contains 200 mg of VIRACEPT. Note: **A measuring teaspoon used for dispensing medication** should be used for measuring VIRACEPT Oral Powder. Ask your pharmacist to make sure you have a medication dispensing teaspoon.

How should VIRACEPT Oral Powder be prepared?

The oral powder may be mixed with a small amount of water, milk, formula, soy formula, soy milk, dietary supplements, or dairy foods such as pudding or ice cream. Once mixed, the entire amount must be taken to obtain the full dose.

Do **not** mix the powder with any acidic food or juice, such as orange or grapefruit juice, apple juice, or apple sauce, because this may create a bitter taste.

Once the powder is mixed, it may be stored at room temperature or refrigerated for up to 6 hours. Do **not** heat the mixed dose once it has been prepared.

Do **not** add water to bottles of oral powder.

VIRACEPT powder is supplied with a scoop for measuring. For help in determining the exact dose of powder for your child, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

VIRACEPT Oral Powder contains aspartame, a low-calorie sweetener, and therefore should not be taken by children with phenylketonuria (PKU).

HOW SHOULD VIRACEPT BE STORED?

Keep VIRACEPT and all other medicines out of the reach of children. Keep bottle closed and store at room temperature (between 59°F and 86°F) away from sources of moisture such as a sink or other damp place. Heat and moisture may reduce the effectiveness of VIRACEPT.

Do not keep medicine that is out of date or that you no longer need. Be sure that if you throw any medicine away, it is out of the reach of children.

Discuss all questions about your health with your doctor. If you have questions about VIRACEPT or any other medication you are taking, ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. You can also call 1.888.VIRACEPT (1.888.847.2237) toll free.

Call 1.888.VIRACEPT

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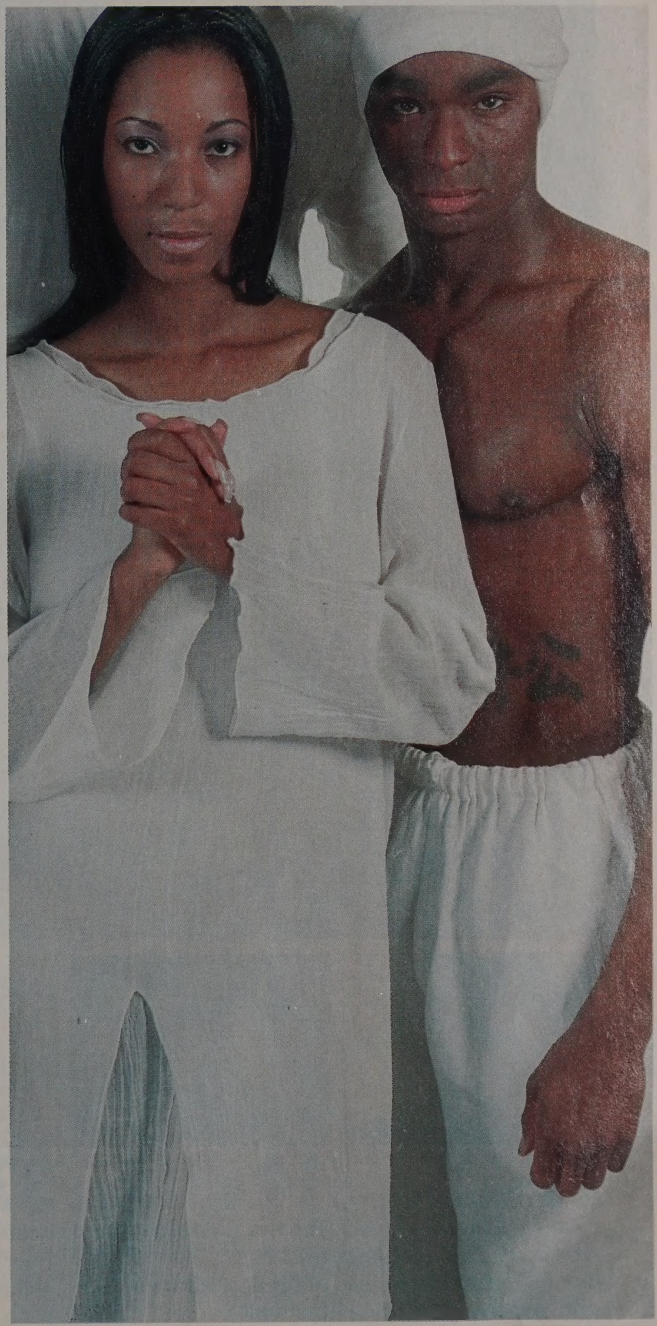

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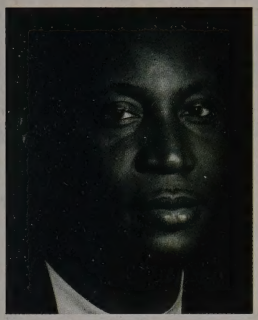
Rev. Freda offers 7 ways to kick the worry habit amid a new report that we worry too much.

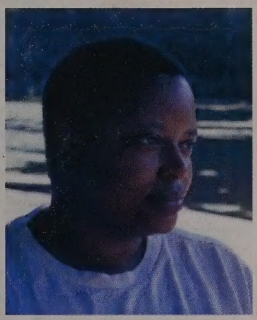


Jerry Jordan Brown

Jerry Jordan-Brown producer, stylist and events coordinator, has worked New York's fashion and music industry for the past ten years producing shows as well as styling for fashion designers. He has also worked as talent coordinator on award shows such as MTV, Essence, VH1 Fashion, The Tony's and Grammy's. Jerry is a passionate and creative individual with a unique sense of style who believes that style builds character and character becomes you. Jerry has styled the past three fashion stories for Venus and says "I'm enjoying my work with Venus. It's great to have a magazine that feature models of African and Latin Descent."

Monica Wheeler

Despite common interest and characteristics, a single ideology rarely encompasses an entire community. As a writer, Monica Wheeler found herself fully engaged in the process by the passionate responses she received while researching the topic "Born this Way or Remember the Day [you chose not to sleep with the opposite sex,]" page 29. "Through biology, experience, or a combination of both, we are all individuals who should strive toward self awareness," says the Drexel University graduate. Monica is a freelance writer and columnist for the Philadelphia Metro, and has written for the Philadelphia and New York Daily News.



Drew Alise Timmens

Baptist minister Rev. Tommie Watkins, Jr. is a warrior at heart. A battle that threatened to crush his spirit was taking place in the icy void between he and his parents. In an astounding act of betrayal, Rev. Watkins was deeply wounded by the people who should have loved and supported him most–his father, Tommie, Sr. and his mother, Gwen. "I cried when Tommie told me what his parents did," contributor Drew Alise Timmens revealed. "I thought, 'How could self-respecting parents do such a thing to their own child?' " What they'd done was persuade Watkins's home church in Texas to ban him from the pulpit. Why? Because he is gay. Watkins' story pg. 18, broke Drew's heart. It will break yours too.

Cy Karrat

Cy is this issue's cover photographer. Currently an assistant to renowned photographer David LaChapelle, Cy is a graduate of New York University - Tisch School of the Arts and is recognized for his own innovative style. He has studied and worked in Paris. His work has been featured in TimeOut and Empire Magazines as well as various Italian arts and theater publications. In demand by professionals in the arts for his portrait work, Cy recently showed in NYC Gulf and Western Gallery with a group of up and coming young artist. "I look foward to working with Venus again in the future."

Dignified Example

My name is Robin and I just wanted to let you know what a truly great magazine you have. I thought when I ordered it that it would be a black version of the Advocate but it's not. It really presents a clear dignified example of who we are as African American gay and lesbians, and how we interact with our community. Keep up the good work.

Robin Weems,
via the internet

Missed Out

I love this magazine. [I just discovered Venus and] I wished I could have gotten the information about the [National Black] Lesbian Conference in Atlanta much sooner. Is there a better way to get info like this early enough so we could plan for it and pass the message on? Also will there be any other upcoming women's event/conference?

J, *via the internet*

Dear J,
We're sorry you missed the National Black Lesbian Conference too. It was sensational! Visit our website www.venusmagazine.com for conference and event postings.

A Striking Balance

In response to those sistahs who feel that Venus is fronting and/or betraying the Lesbi-cause, I must say that maybe, just maybe Venus gets it! Maybe we can't have a full discourse about our sexuality apart from the "other" (in this case, men). I'm fully aware of the politics of sexism/misogyny/patriarchy and the need for "safe space" and women shouldn't feel pressured to share or compromise. I'm also a strong critic of any publication by African Americans that in any way seeks to please whites or straights [if it's LBGT] by publishing "soft" and uncritical articles/features. This would equally apply to Venus if I thought that including articles about men was about "people pleasing."

I've argued this for years with my male peers who [some] spend inordinate amount of energy proving they're not women or just how much they despise them. This is both tired and backwards. The "liberation" army needs all of us. Seeing my sistahs as the "enemy" or them seeing me as such, only reinforces victimization, poorly conceived politics, alienation and recycled rage.

Venus magazine as far as I'm concerned seeks to strike a balance in sustaining a venue that doesn't need to make the "other" invisible in order to assert ones visibility.

Victor R. Pond
Training Coordinator
Chicago Department of Public Health

The NEW Hollywood Blvd.

I was delighted to find a story about Los Angeles featured in the Special Travel Issue. I appreciate seeing our city mentioned. Amanda Love's story captured a few of the venues that may be of interest to our Black, Gay/Lesbian visitors. I must add that Amanda will need to return to the Hollywood Boulevard area to see the on-going changes. We have a metro link to downtown or Universal Studios, a brand new Renaissance Hotel along with a 3,000 person theatre complex that will house the Academy Awards among others. There will be new shops - high end mixed in with the tattoo stores and the souvenir shops. It will be one of the hot spots in Los Angeles. The hotel opens this fall and the complex will continue to grow through 2002. I have enjoyed reading Venus. While I am Caucasian, I celebrate the African genes I possess from a few generations past —a long time family secret now out of the closet! I am pleased to see a magazine focused on the beautiful Black Gay & Lesbian community. I embrace your purpose.

Cory Jairus Abke
Los Angeles Convention & Visitor's Bureau

VENUS

FOR PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN THE LIFE

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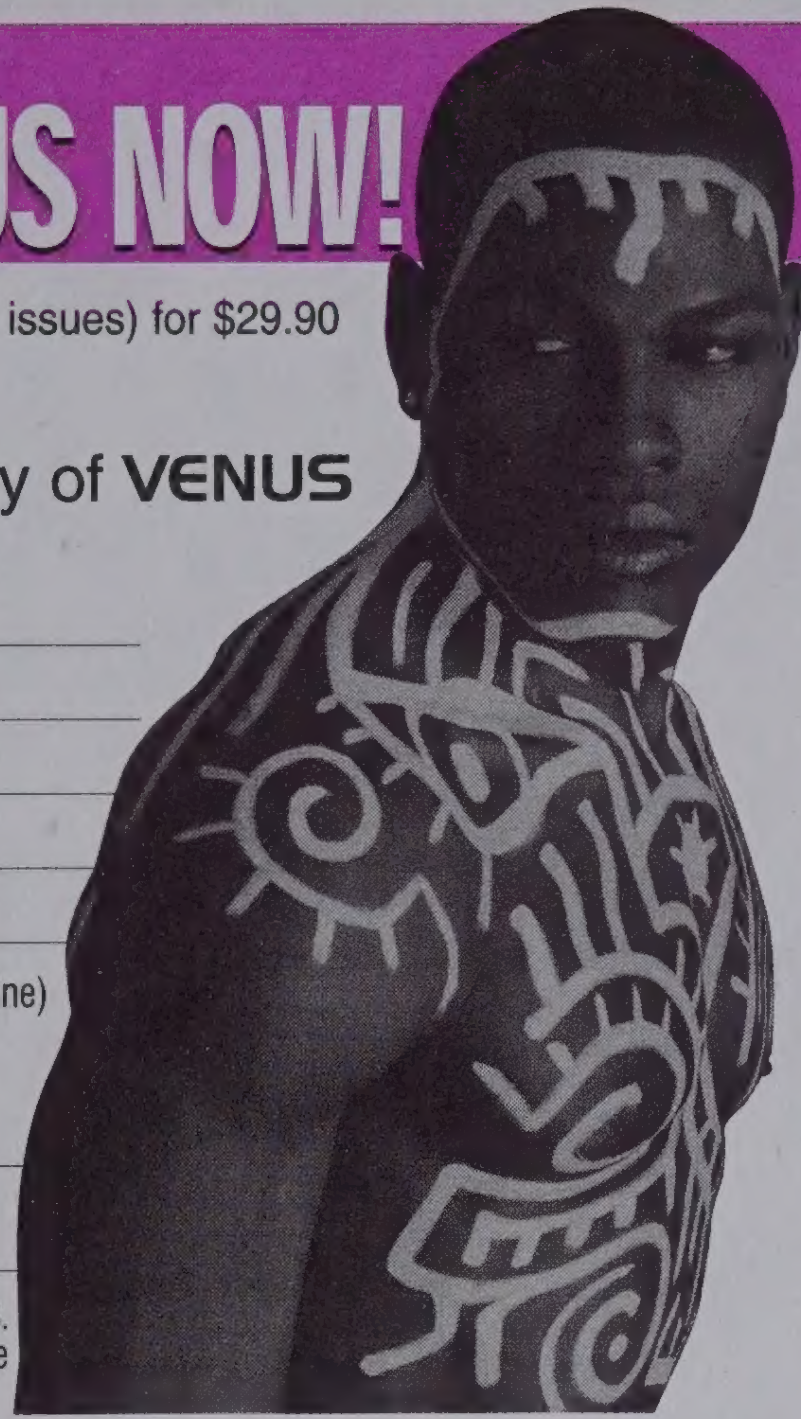

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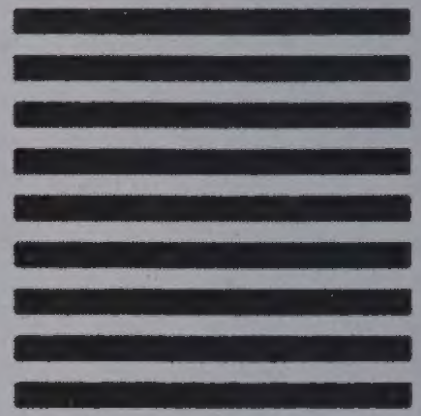

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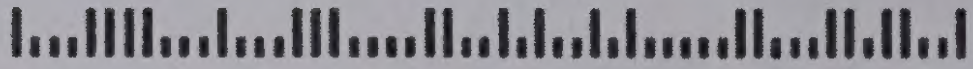

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*Scott-Levin, Source Prescription Audit, (retail pharmacies), January to June, 2000.
† Roche Amplicor HIV-1 MONITOR® Test.

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Glaxo Wellcome HIV Division

Please see Brief Summary for COMBIVIR on the adjacent page.

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Printed in USA. CBV436R0 August 2000

Información para el paciente acerca de las Tabletas de COMBIVIR® (150 mg de lamivudina / 300 mg de zidovudina)

para la infección del VIH (Virus de Inmunodeficiencia Humana)
Nombre genérico: tabletas de lamivudina/zidovudina

Favor de leer esta información antes de comenzar a tomar COMBIVIR (En inglés se pronuncia: COM-BI-VIR). Mantenerse informado(a) le ayudará a colaborar más estrechamente con su médico y su equipo de atención a la salud para determinar qué es lo que más le conviene a usted. Recuerde: esta información no reemplaza la discusión detallada con su profesional de salud. Mientras usa COMBIVIR debe seguir bajo el cuidado de un médico y no debe cambiar o dejar el tratamiento sin antes hablar con su profesional de salud.

¿Qué es COMBIVIR?

COMBIVIR es la marca de una tableta que combina las Tabletas de EPIVIR® (lamivudina) [3TC®] y las Tabletas de RETROVIR® (zidovudina) [ZDV], dos medicamentos que se usan para tratar el VIH (Virus de Inmunodeficiencia Humana). El VIH es el virus que causa el SIDA (Síndrome de Inmunodeficiencia Adquirida).

¿Cómo funciona COMBIVIR?

COMBIVIR es una combinación de lamivudina (en inglés se pronuncia "lamivudín") y zidovudina (en inglés se pronuncia "zidovudín"), dos medicamentos (análogos de nucleósidos) que desaceleran la reproducción del virus del VIH. Esto puede reducir la habilidad del virus para infectar nuevas células. Podría ayudar a reducir la cantidad de VIH en su cuerpo (llamado "carga viral") y elevar su conteo de células CD4 (T). Lamivudina y zidovudina, al usarse juntos, pueden tener un efecto más potente (sinergístico) contra el virus. COMBIVIR es una forma conveniente de tomar lamivudina y zidovudina. COMBIVIR se debe tomar por lo general con otra terapia contra el VIH.

¿Trabajará COMBIVIR de la misma forma que EPIVIR y RETROVIR tomados conjuntamente?

Sí. El hecho de tomar una Tableta de COMBIVIR dos veces al día es lo mismo que tomar una Tableta de EPIVIR de 150 mg dos veces al día y ya sea dos Cápsulas de RETROVIR de 100 mg tres veces al día o una Tableta de RETROVIR de 300 mg dos veces al día.

¿Cómo debo tomar COMBIVIR?

Tome COMBIVIR tal como le haya indicado su médico. La dosis recomendada es una Tableta de COMBIVIR dos veces al día, por vía oral, con o sin comida. A fin de asegurarse de que COMBIVIR sea beneficioso para usted, no debe dejar de tomar dosis o tomarse periodos de descanso sin medicamentos.

¿Qué debo hacer si me olvido de tomar una dosis de COMBIVIR?

Si se le olvida tomar una dosis por más de 4 horas, espere y tómese la dosis siguiente según el horario normal. Pero, si se trata de menos de 4 horas, tómese esa dosis inmediatamente. Luego, tómese la dosis siguiente según el horario normal. En ningún momento debe tomarse más o menos de su dosis recetada de COMBIVIR.

¿Cura COMBIVIR la infección del VIH o el SIDA?

No. Todavía no hay cura para la infección del VIH ni el SIDA. Quienes toman COMBIVIR aún pueden contraer infecciones u otras enfermedades relacionadas con el VIH. Por esto, es sumamente importante permanecer bajo el cuidado de un profesional de salud. Se ha demostrado que el uso de lamivudina más zidovudina ayuda a los pacientes que tienen la infección del VIH a mantenerse sanos y vivir más tiempo.

¿Reduce COMBIVIR el riesgo de transmitir el VIH a otras personas?

No. COMBIVIR, al igual que otros medicamentos contra el VIH, no ha demostrado que reduzca el riesgo de transmitir el VIH a otras personas mediante el contacto sexual o la contaminación de la sangre.

¿Quién no debe tomar COMBIVIR?

Usted no debe tomar COMBIVIR si ha tenido alguna reacción alérgica fuerte a lamivudina o zidovudina.

No tome COMBIVIR al mismo tiempo que toma EPIVIR o RETROVIR, ya que éstos también contienen lamivudina y zidovudina.

Se debe contemplar la dosis individual de EPIVIR más RETROVIR, en vez de COMBIVIR, para:

- Niños menores de los 12 años de edad.
- Toda persona que necesite ajustar la dosis debido a efectos secundarios del medicamento o una mala función hepática.

¿De qué problemas o condiciones médicas debo hablar con mi profesional de salud?

Hable con su profesional de salud si:

- Está embarazada o queda embarazada mientras toma COMBIVIR. Pregúntele a su médico en cuanto a la inscripción en el Registro Antirretroviral de Embarazos: 1-800-258-4263.
- Está amamantando. Las madres infectadas con el VIH no deben amamantar a sus bebés puesto que el VIH se encuentra en la leche materna.

Asimismo, hable con su médico acerca de:

- Los problemas con sus conteos sanguíneos.
- Los problemas con sus músculos.
- Los problemas con sus riñones.
- Problemas con su hígado, especialmente si tiene una enfermedad hepática entre leve y moderada, como la hepatitis.
- Si usted tiene 65 años de edad o más, consulte a su profesional de las salud acerca del funcionamiento de su hígado, sus riñones y su corazón, acerca de otras enfermedades que padezca y acerca de cualquier otro medicamento que esté tomando. Es posible que sea necesario modificar la dosis.

¿Se puede tomar COMBIVIR con otros medicamentos?

Sí. COMBIVIR se puede tomar con la mayoría de los medicamentos, incluyendo la mayoría de las medicinas contra el VIH. Asegúrese de informarle a su profesional de salud en cuanto a todos los medicamentos que toma, vendidos sin receta o dispensados por receta.

¿Cuáles son los efectos secundarios de COMBIVIR?

No confíe solamente en este resumen para información de los efectos secundarios. Su profesional de salud le puede informar acerca de la lista completa de los efectos secundarios relacionados con su caso individual.

No se anticipa que la seguridad de COMBIVIR sea distinta a la de EPIVIR y RETROVIR dados por separado.

En los estudios clínicos de lamivudina más zidovudina, los efectos secundarios que se presentaron en un mínimo del 5% de los pacientes incluyeron: dolores musculares y de las articulaciones, dolor de cabeza, náusea, debilidad y fatiga, síntomas nasales, tos, diarrea, náusea y vómito, neuropatía, dificultad en dormir, fiebre o escalofríos, pérdida del apetito, vértigo, dolor o calambres abdominales, depresión, erupciones cutáneas e indigestión.

Es importante saber que puede haber efectos secundarios graves con COMBIVIR, tales como una reducción en glóbulos rojos y leucocitos y daños musculares. Con ciertos medicamentos contra el VIH, incluyendo los medicamentos que son análogos de nucleósidos, se ha reportado la acumulación de ácido láctico e inflamación del hígado.

Se recomiendan análisis de sangre periódicos para las personas infectadas con el VIH. Si hay ciertos cambios en sus resultados de los análisis de laboratorio mientras toma COMBIVIR, especialmente si se pone anémico(a) o si su conteo de leucocitos queda demasiado bajo, es posible que haya que ajustar su medicamento: su médico le podría recetar EPIVIR y RETROVIR por separado en vez de COMBIVIR.

Infórmele a su médico inmediatamente en cuanto a todo efecto secundario o demás síntomas poco comunes que tenga.

Información adicional

Este medicamento se receta para una condición en particular. No lo use para otras condiciones, ni se lo de a otra persona. Mantenga COMBIVIR y toda medicina fuera del alcance de niños.

Al igual que la mayoría de las medicinas dispensadas por receta, lamivudina y zidovudina tuvieron que ser probadas en animales antes de que se permitiera su uso en seres humanos. En los estudios con animales, en dosis mucho más elevadas que las usadas en el ser humano, zidovudina fue relacionado con tumores vaginales. Su profesional de salud le puede informar más en cuanto a la forma en que los medicamentos se prueban en animales y lo que los resultados de esas pruebas puedan significar en cuanto a la seguridad para usted.

¿Cómo debo almacenar las Tabletas de COMBIVIR?

Las Tabletas de COMBIVIR se deben almacenar a temperatura ambiente y no necesitan refrigeración.

Esto constituye un resumen de la información acerca de COMBIVIR. Si tiene preguntas o inquietudes adicionales acerca de COMBIVIR o del VIH, hable con su profesional de salud.

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Reference: 1. Hammer SM, Squires KE, Hughes MD, et al. A controlled trial of two nucleoside analogues plus indinavir in persons with human immunodeficiency virus infection and CD4 cell counts of 200 per cubic millimeter or less. *N Engl J Med.* 1997;337:725-733.

MARILYN HUMPHRIES

The Rev. Irene Monroe

Finding Our Spiritual Voice

As African American lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, we have no language that adequately articulates the unique embodiment of our spirituality. Looking for ways to express the ethos of our spirituality, many African American LGBT people have borrowed language from both white queer and black religious cultures that, at best, have muffled our spiritual reality, and, at worse, muted it. The task has always been for us as we straddle both cultures to develop a language that speaks our truth.

As resident aliens to white queer culture, we navigate through the dominant queer culture's lexicon for words that speak truth to our reality. However, we as African American LGBT people find that their control and dominance of the lexicon erodes our power and deletes our spiritual expressions. Words like 'lesbian', 'gay', 'queer', 'Butch', 'femme' all strip us of our particular history, struggle and spirituality as a sexual group; thus, assuming a queer universality. This renders us invisible and speechless.

We are resident aliens. African American LGBT people speak of a God we know about through heterosexist language. With the Black Church's theological qualifier to love the sinner-us, but to hate the sin-our sexual orientation, we are permanent souls of the Black church, but we are never fully permanent souls in it.

Language is an index of societal attitudes, behaviors and beliefs that all have spiritual and theological underpinnings that keep them in place. Language is a political tool that determines who speaks when, where, how and on what topics. In other words, language is power. And our ancestors understood the power of language.

> "With the Black Church's theological qualifier to love the sinner-us, but to hate the sin-our sexual orientation, we are permanent souls of the Black church, but we are never fully permanent souls in it."

For example, as people of African descent, who we are is shaped by a spiritual understanding that is expressed in our music, living, social protest and language. Our enslaved ancestors knew that their liberation is not only rooted in their acts of social protests, but it is also rooted in their use of language, which is why they used the Exodus narrative in the Old Testament as their talking-book.

Functioning as a talking book for our ancestors, the Exodus narrative dramatically shifts the discourse on slavery from the authority of white voices to the control of black voices. In so doing, Exodus was used to rebuke themes of silence, exclusion and oppression in the text which in return allowed our ancestors to represent themselves as speaking subjects outside of the text.

White racist queer language and black heterosexist religious language not only diminish the range of African American LGBT spiritual thought, but they also diminish the scope of African American LGBT spiritual action to effect change. Catch in this quagmire how do we develop a language that speaks truth to our spirituality? The answer is in the model our ancestors used.

We need to adopt a spiritual narrative as our talking-book that speaks to our social reality. With such narrative we can construct a spiritual vernacular and theology that indelibly speaks for and to an African American LGBT spiritual sensibility. This narrative would function as a mode of speaking not only within the text that reinforces our spiritual identity, but it would also function as a mode of speaking outside of the text that affirms our everyday lived experience. Only then will both white queer and black religious cultures understand that the holiness of our lives is also expressed as a sacred text.

Rev. Irene Monroe is a doctoral candidate in Religion, Gender and Culture at Harvard Divinity School and a Ford Foundation fellow. Read more of her writings at www.thewitness.org/agw/agw-monroe.html.

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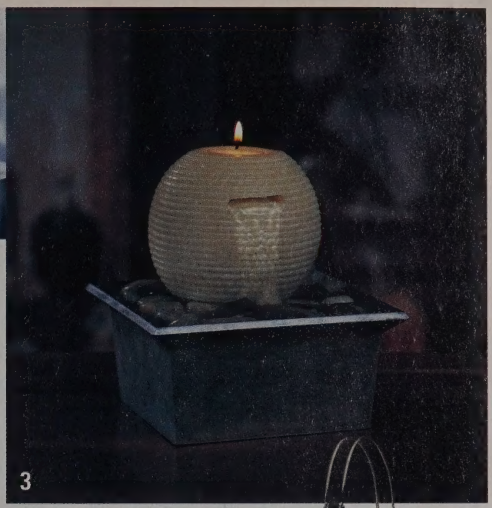

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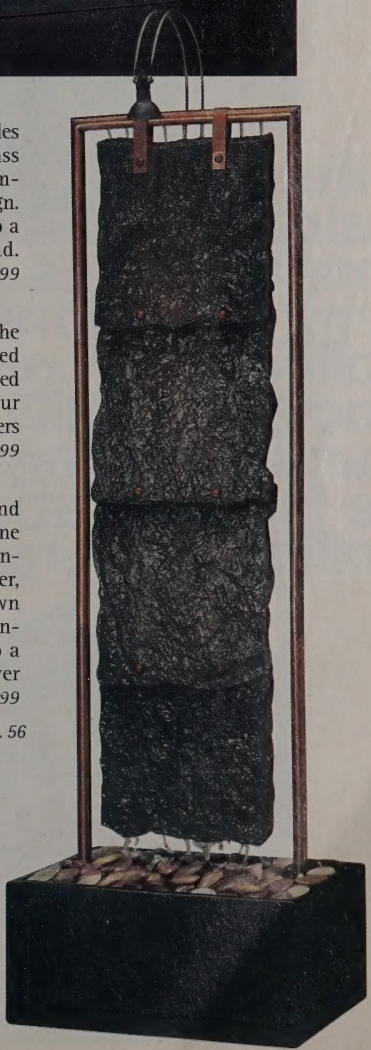

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Everybody worries from time to time, but people with **generalized anxiety disorder** (GAD) spend nearly 40 hours per week, or a "full-time job," worrying, approximately three times the general population, according to a new study by Freedom From Fear. The survey of more than 1,200 people found that 80 percent of GAD sufferers are concerned and troubled by how much they worry, compared to less than half of the general public. Affecting about five percent of the population, GAD is a debilitating condition characterized by persistent and exaggerated worry, anxiety and tension over routine and life circumstances, which can severally impact work, social life and family relationships.

The survey also revealed that job stability; finances and health were among the most common worries that kept people up at night. While these are worries of people with or with out GAD, what ultimately separates these groups is the extent to which worry consumes their daily life. For instance, nearly half of the GAD population polled reported having difficulty sleeping through the night due to worries, almost three times more than the general public. The good news is that there is hope for people with GAD. Though only one third of sufferes actually seek treatment, both medication and psychotherapy are effective in relieving the symptoms of the condition. Meditation and prayer are also highly effective.

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1. Trust.
Learn to trust your feelings and intuitions -they are your guides.

2. Check Your Beliefs.
Are you trusting your higher power within? Trusting immediately reduces worry.

3. Affirm.
"The Universe will provide, through its intricate and infinite connections, my needs and desires." Continue to affirm until you believe it!

4. Create Safe Space.
Make space at home where you can have peace and quiet.

5. Create Fun Space.
Laughter lightens the load.

6. Check for Triggers.
Know that it is your God-given right to have harmony, peace, stillness and joy.

7. Honor Yourself.
Be willing to let go of people, places and/or things that create stress and worry.

—Rev. Freda, Senior Pastor
Unity Fellowship Church
Los Angeles, CA

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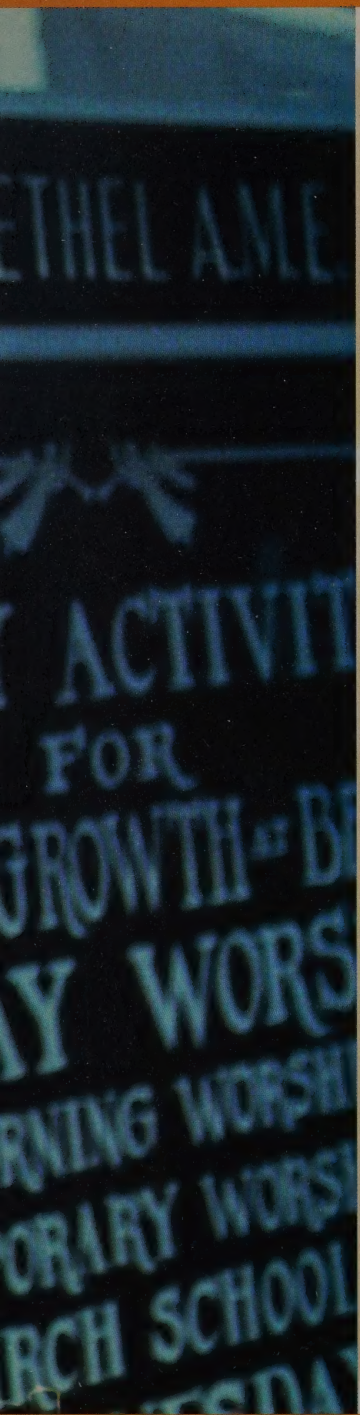
GREATER



Rev Tommy Watkins
Faith Warrior

Words by Drew Alise Timmens
Images by Jonathan Brooks

Honor, courage and commitment are core values drummed into Tommie Watkins, Jr. all his life, first by his parents, Gwen and Tommie, Sr.; then by his church; and finally, by the U.S. Navy. Today, at 26, Watkins is a son most parents would brag about and a man most organizations would be thrilled to have on their team. He is intelligent, a facile communicator, an able manager, doggedly determined, honest almost to a fault, insightful and compassionate. So why did his parents betray and practically disown him, the Naval Academy force him to resign and the African Methodist Episcopal Church decline to ordain him? One reason only: Tommie Watkins, Jr. is a gay man.

Watkins was ordained a Baptist minister at 16-years old. "I just got so overwhelmed with the [desire to preach] that I told my pastor and he was not at all surprised. He said he'd kind of been waiting on me to come and tell him . . . ," he relates. He was ordained at First Missionary Baptist Church of Hueytown in Bessemer, Alabama and joined the staff as its youth minister. His parents, who both remain very active at First Baptist, were rightfully proud of their boy.

In addition to loving God, Watkins also loved to fly. He participated in the Explorer Scouts' aviation program and got his private pilot's license while still in high school. But flying was more than a hobby. Watkins wanted to make it a career. He hung out at Birmingham International Airport where he talked to some of the pilots there on layover. "From my grades in high school, they told me that I would be a good candidate and I should try to get into [the U.S. Naval Academy at] Annapolis or one of the [other] service academies." He entered Annapolis in 1994.

By the end of his junior year in 1997, Watkins was in the top third of his class with a 3.3 GPA, had been voted class president twice and earned the rank of battalion commander responsible for approximately 700 subordinates. He was 20-years old.

Tragically, a fellow midshipman, with whom Watkins had shared a 20-month romantic relationship, complained to his commanding officer that Watkins harassed him. Although a subsequent investigation proved that the relationship was consensual, in the age of "Don't ask, don't tell," Watkins was still in trouble. He was relieved of all his commands, told that he would have to undergo an administrative hearing and was, in

Rev. Tommy Watkins shares a moment with his mentor, Rev. Dr. Marilyn Hardy, of Greater Bethel AME Church, a 100-year old, 1200-member church in Miami.

essence, forced to resign. The other midshipman, a great-nephew of infamous Vietnam-era commander Gen. William Westmoreland, remained at Annapolis and is currently a Navy lieutenant.

After Watkins resigned, the Navy tried to recoup almost $90,000 spent on his education. Watkins finally prevailed in 2000, but his efforts made national news and his parents were livid. "My mother's whole religious issue is that it's not right regardless of who it is. It's embarrassing for your child to be on the front page with the headline 'Gay ex-midshipman wins Navy suit' or something like that. . . .[S]he finds it selfish of me to have done that without considering the consequences on her," he explained sadly.

Watkins' parents have now publicly rebuffed him. Just before Mother's Day, his older brother informed him that their parents had asked First Baptist to bar their youngest son from the pulpit. The

> "My mother's whole issue is that it's embarrassing for your child to be on the front page with the headline 'Gay ex-midshipman wins Navy suit.'

been stabbed, but it's got to be worse than being stabbed in the back. It's more like I was a dam holding back all of the people against me. But with my parents' actions, holes have been punched and the water is flowing out."

After the Naval Academy, Watkins finished his degree at the prestigious Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida and was recruited by Anderson Consulting in Miami. There, he got involved with historic Greater Bethel AME Church, a 100-year-old, 1200-member church whose clergy includes Rev. Dr. Marilyn Hardy who wrote her doctoral thesis on transforming black clergy's hearts and minds on sexuality and spirituality. Watkins became her assistant and is now the program director for HIV/AIDS prevention education, supervises 10 staff members, oversees the church's housing construction program for people with HIV/AIDS and initiated the Ministry of Reconciliation.

Hardy explains that the Ministry of Reconciliation "is where we talk about sexuality, spirituality and [it began by] using my thesis." The ministry, which involves about 80 people twice a month, just celebrated its first anniversary. She emphasizes that Watkins has become "a leader in his own right, bringing learning to the people in our community and our church about God and people who are created homosexual [or transgendered] to help us understand about compassion and love." Hardy goes on to say the Greater Bethel community has embraced him as part of their ordained clergy. When interviewed in early May, she did not know that Watkins' welcome and the Ministry of Reconciliation were about to change because of a powerful opponent.

Bishop John H. Adams is the episcopal leader of the South Florida Conference of the AME Church. Little happens within the church body in South Florida without his knowledge. Last year, Watkins applied to the conference's Board of Examiners for recognition of his Baptist ordination and for ordination as an AME itinerant deacon (the lowest level of itinerant minister). The board denied his application without explanation.

"It's so painful. I've never been stabbed, but it's got to be worse than being stabbed in the back. It's more like I was a dam holding back all of the people against me. But with my parents' actions, holes have been punched and the water is flowing out."

Board of Deacons, on which Tommie, Sr. sits, granted the request. Surprisingly, Watkins and his father spoke shortly after the board's actions, but Tommie, Sr. did not say a word about the decision.

Although Watkins cannot preach at First Baptist, he remains an ordained Baptist minister. A recall of his ordination would require a vote by the entire First Baptist congregation. Still, he is deeply hurt. "It's so painful, he says. "I've never

Shortly afterwards, Watkins wrote to Adams to request a meeting. They met in Adams' Jacksonville office for about 45 minutes. "The substance was that he understood my position, but he was concerned that [the successful fight with the Navy] was in the paper, so it was public knowledge. And he made the comment that the AME Church has the same stance as the military: Don't ask, don't tell," Watkins reports of the meeting. He also attributes Adams as saying that

Continued on page 45

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PEGGIE MOORE FOR ZUNA INSTITUTE

National Black Lesbian Conference Fills Atlanta's Swissotel.

Oakland organizer, Francine Ramsey, and the women of Zuna Institute, a national advocacy group for black lesbians, set out a year ago to produce the National Black Lesbian Conference and have never looked back. "Some people told us that Atlanta wasn't ready for this type of event but we decided this was the right city and the right time for black lesbians to confer," Ramsey said.

The opening banquet featured a welcome by City of Decatur Commissioner, Kecia Cunningham and a rousing keynote address by Georgia State University's Dr. Shirlene Holmes. Holmes' spirit filled words reminded the sistahs exactly how powerful they are and why Atlanta and the world will never be the same. Then, renowned poet, Stace Ann Chin—"I came to fuck some shit up!"—wore the sistahs out with her powerful delivery and timing.

Woman engaged in a variety of workshops and discussion groups which included a writing seminar by Sharon Bridgeforth, author of *The Bull Jean Stories*. Three 'main events' provided a variety of entertainment including a talent showcase by Zuna, a lesbian prom produced by Atlanta's Girls in the Night and Venus Magazine's Jazz Reception sponsored by Bailey's Irish Creme. Each event was heavily attended.

On Easter Sunday morning a surmmonette by Emory University Divinity School graduate, Dorinda Henry, closed the conference. Already organizations serving black lesbians are positioning themselves to host the next meeting in their city. Don't miss 2003! V

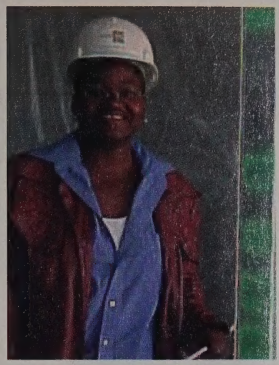
Kathy Williams with her partner, jazz vocalist Lillie Huddleston, who performed at the Venus Reception.

Comedian, Karen Williams, Hosts HRC dinner.

Karen Williams & E. Lynn Harris 'Turn It Out' at HRC Cleveland Dinner.

Cleveland Ohio was certainly the place to be last May for the Human Rights Campaign annual dinner. The "Queen of Improv," Karen Williams performed. Williams is the creator and facilitator of the **Humor-at-Large Workshop Series** and founder of the **National Women's Comedy Conference**. She also teaches stand-up comedy in the dramatic arts dept. of Cleveland State University, Check her out hahainstitute.com. E. Lynn Harris gave the keynote address. He's got a new book out, *Anyway the Wind Blows*, and is currently on a national signing tour. Catch him in your city, or at elynnharris.com. *E. Lynn pictured below with Elizabeth Birch, Executive Dir. at HRC.*

Johnnie Pratt Joins SF Center



San Francisco LGBT Community Center Project Announces Pratt as New Outreach Director

The San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) Community Center Project announced the hiring of Outreach Director, Johnnie Pratt. Pratt joins the Community Center project from *Pallotta TeamWorks AIDS Rides* where she coordinated logistics and outreach for Rides in New York, Texas and California. She has also worked with *Gods Love We Deliver*, an AIDS service organization in New York.

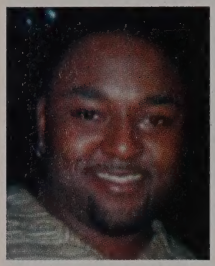
Among Pratt's responsibilities will be organizing speakers bureaus, community forums and other events to educate San Francisco residents about the Center and urge them to get involved. She will also be available to speak about the Center at community organization and other meetings.

"As an African-American Lesbian, I'm personally committed to making sure everyone feels welcome at their Community Center," said Pratt. "The building's almost complete, but it won't be a Community Center until it's filled with the people it was meant to serve."

Organizations, clubs or groups of individuals interested in scheduling a presentation on the Center at their next meeting should call Johnnie Pratt at 415-437-2257 or email her at johnniep@sfcenter.org.

The San Francisco Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center will finally give the Bay Area,s LGBT residents and visitors a community home where we can gather, access community services and organizations, find employment, housing and health resources, demonstrate the power of our collective voice, honor our proud history and boldly create our future as diverse individuals and a unified community together. The Center is scheduled to open this year.

The Perfect Man in ME



by Phillip Rashon

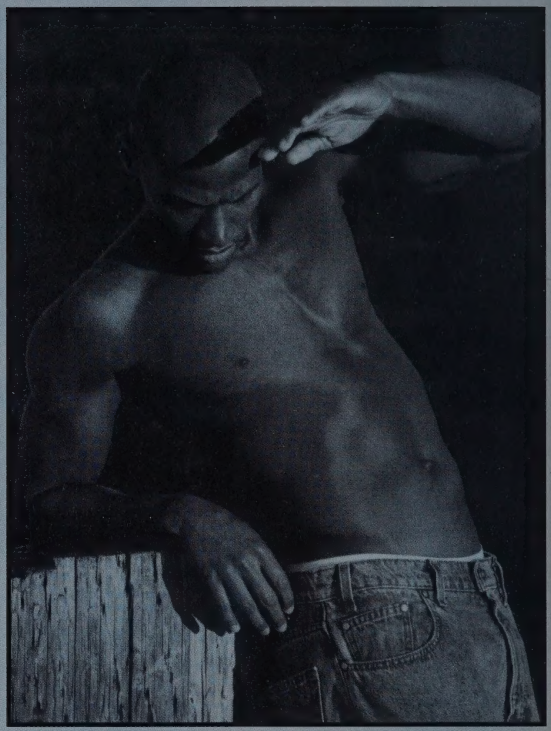
How many times have I found myself wondering why I don't have the man of my dreams? A man whose faults I can live with. A person that I can count on to promote my personal, professional and sexual growth. Did I mention sexual growth? Hum. With the absence of love, or at least lust, I began to question myself.

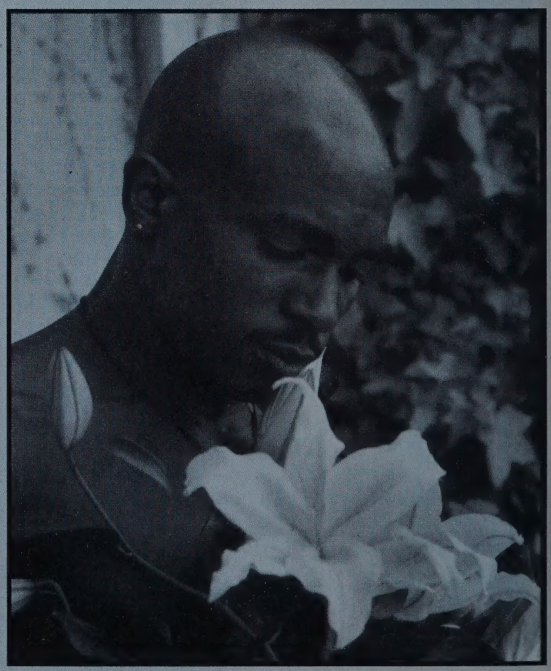
"Am I too fat?" "Do guys find me attractive?" "Hell, do I smell?" These were the little insecurities that constanly ran through my mind. "If I feel good about myself on most days and I think I have a lot to offer, then where is the partner with whom I can share all of these wonderful qualities?" Well, with much introspection, lots of tenacity and dating my share of undesirables, I came to realize that there is nothing wrong with me. I am the bomb! I was just looking for something that will eventually come in due time. For now I can find that special man right inside of the mirror.

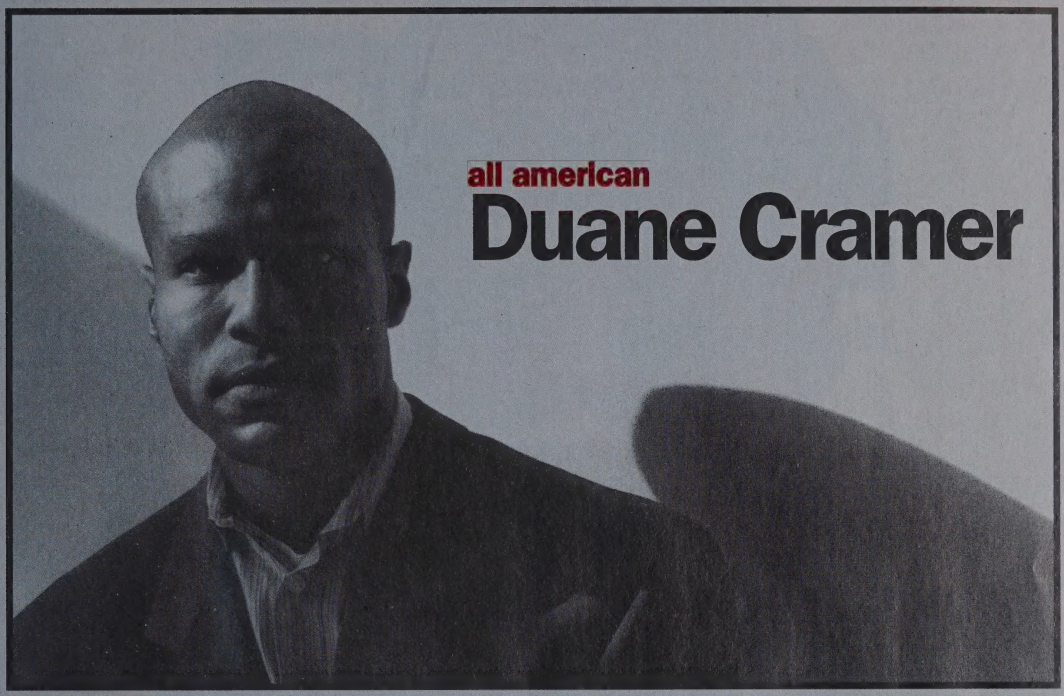
My heart and soul is ready for love; however the universe has yet to prepare my love for me. In the past, when I found myself in periods of transition, I immediately wanted to love and share my life with someone. Little did I know, the feelings of uncertainty and imbalance were not a call for a beautiful stranger, but they were in fact an indication that I should take a survey of my junk closet and do a little spring cleaning!

This isn't to say that I shouldn't love another, but that I should embrace me, feel good and model the type of man that I want in my life. When *he* finally comes *he* will see that I love myself deeply and I take care of me. The way I treat myself will provide *him* with a framework on how to nuture my soul. It will also be a representation of how open I am to receiving love and how Ican nuture *him.*

Through much trial and error I've come to realize that the GOOD man in me, will eventual manifest it's self into a GOOD man for me. As long as I don't forget that my lover is a compliment to what already exists and not a replacement for my life, I will be just fine. V





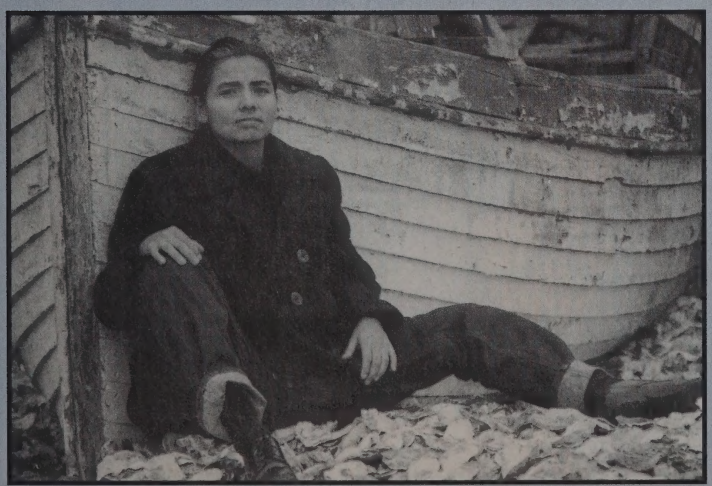


all american
Duane Cramer

TARRANCE PITTS

Photographer Duane Cramer premiered a flawless collection of black and white images at the opening of his sophomore exhibit that bring a new perspective to passe notions of America. The center piece of Cramer's "all american" is a statuesque African-American male poised, proud and unflinching, in front of the country's stars and stripes. Reflected in Cramer's America is a flag that is both provocative and political.

The impetus behind Cramer's work comes from his "personal experience with death [and] losing [his] father." Life and death are present in his images. The juxtaposition of a nude man ascending the debris of demolished cars confirms this. His first show, "Call and Response," captured the urgent reflections of politicians, activists and celebrity artists on Capitol Hill during a conference on HIV/AIDS, and public health in the African-American community. It was sixteen years ago when Cramer segued from model to photographer. He lost his father two years later to complications relating to HIV/AIDS complications.



Black Brothers Esteem (BBE), a San Francisco AIDS service organization, awarded Cramer with the BBE Umoja Award for Community Service in 2000. In 2001, Dunae was voted as a Grand Marshall of the 31st Anniversary San Francisco Lesbian & Gay Pride Parade and Celebration.

To view more of his work, visit Duane Cramer online at: http://www.duanecramer.com.

Were You Born This Way?

by Monica Wheeler

Or Can You Remember the Day . . .

You Chose Not to Sleep with the Opposite Sex?

It is an old question that many of us don't dare ask out loud: 'Why am I gay or lesbian?' Is it nature or nurture? Biology or sociology? Although all gays and lesbians have asked these questions, we wondered if the response from the black gay and lesbian community differed from its general white counterpart. To find the answer, we conducted a poll and sent questionnaires to 1,800 people on Venus' on-line list. Nearly 95 percent of those who responded answered "I was born this way."

Although in the minority, there were strong advocates for their sexual orientation being thrust upon them by social factors. Some of the answers couldn't be divided into either of the two camps. Below are samplings of the various responses we received from our poll.

"I do not believe that I was born this way," says Kevin [not his real name], a resident of New York City, for the last seven years has been living with a male partner. "I began a sexual experimentation with men when I was five years old. I was in one of life's self-discovery stages. I agree with Freud when he suggests that humans are bisexual. We make choices of how we play it out."

Kevin describes his involvement with men only for the past 10 years as a selection based on "sexual choice."

Milton Howard of Charlotte, NC, believes we were born with our sexual identities. Howard recalls having a crush on his best friend in pre-school. "Only an idiot would choose to be gay in this society, realizing that two social strikes are already against him: being born black and a man in this a prejudiced world."

V. M. Anderson, a native of Augusta, Ga, said her sentiments on the subject were akin to the Rev. Carl L. Bean's lyric: "Cuz I'm happy and I'm carefree and I'm gay; I was born this way!" As a teenager she had heterosexual relationships, but felt she was acting, as if she were in a play reading a script.

"In my early teens, I'd daydream for hours about what it would be Like to kiss Marie, an older girl who sauntered down the streets. As time went on I progressed from loving the way a woman moved to the way she smelled, to the way she smiled, and to the way she touched.

Far back in memory, I remember having an attraction for women. The day I "discovered" women was the day I became me and stopped acting out scenes because that's what girls (or boys) are supposed to do."

Malik Williams of Atlanta believes, too, that the roots of his sexuality are biological rather than a "lifestyle" choice. "The only choice I made was to be who I am without shame, guilt or remorse."

Stephan Ballard believe it is impossible to be born gay. "When I was 10, I vividly remember being fondled by some kids at summer camp," Ballard revealed. "They threatened me not to tell anyone. I had a couple of girlfriends, but thereafter, I started to like boys because that's all I messed with for a long while."

Twenty-six year old Pam said she made a conscious decision in terms of her sexual orientation. "I remember befriending someone in high school who became attracted to me," Pam says. "She eventually asked if we could become intimate. I declined. 'Lesbian' wasn't even in my vocabulary at that time. I was still a virgin believing I wanted to be with men. Later, the idea of having sex with a woman intrigued me. I began to look at women differently. I wondered what it would be like to kiss a girl, to hold her in my arms. So, I eventually met a woman who was receptive to the idea and I never turned back."

Although 55 year old Cynthia Garner had been attracted to women since she was a child, in 1955 she married and stayed in the

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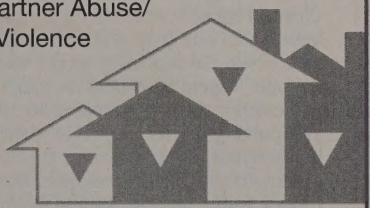

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Venus Readers POLL
Were You Born This Way?

"Sleeping with men didn't feel right. Oh, they treated me well, but I always felt that something was missing; something that I needed for my spiritual survival. It wasn't until I had "jumped the broom" so to speak, and had my first female lover, that I found out what was missing. It was free and total expression of myself. Then the puzzle that had been my life locked into place."
Patricia Nelson, 45
Minneapolis, MN

"I was definitey born this way..remember having this crush on this little brother in Kindergarten...then we kissed and it was so pure and innocent and I loved it."
Jason, 38
Manhattan, NY

"No one molested, fondled or raped me when I was young. I love MEN and that's all I can say. I identify with women but physically and sexually I am a man's man at heart. I have tried several times to adore women as I have men, but have found I was wasting my time."
Alan, 30
Atlanta, GA

"I don't have scientific proof that we are born the way we are; but my gut tells me that our issue is self-acceptance, not choice."
James C. Roberts, 51
Philadelphia, PA

"When I was 11 I thought Micheal Jackson was GOD. When I was 14 I had my first '[wet] dream' and that was about Janet Jackson, not Micheal. That's when I realized I [might be a lesbian.] I have had girlfriends ever since."
Tamira August, 25
Houston

"I guess I made a conscience decision to be gay but I don't believe I could have decided to be something I wasn't already."
Teashi Lee Duckworth, 38
New York City

"As I never began sleeping with the opposite sex, there was never a choice to make. From kindergarten on, I was attracted only to other females. There was no choice about it."
Julie Voyles, 36
Denver, Colorado

"I began sexual experimentation with men when I was five. I was in one of life's self-discovery stages. I agree with Freud when he suggests that humans are bisexual. We make choices how we play it out."

marriage for 19 years before she began living as a lesbian.

"I was not turned off to men, but I wanted to be part of a community and there was no bisexual community of which I was aware. I stayed active in the black lesbian community for more than 20 years. About two year ago, I decided that I wanted contact with men again. I then began to identify myself as bisexual."

Jorhan Mbonisi observed that men were socialized in patronizing, chauvinistic ways and didn't like it. She refused to go through life dealing with such attitudes, and wanted to be involved with someone who saw her as an equal. She found comfort in a woman. After that experience, Mbonisi says: "I haven't wanted a hard body, hard energy, or hostile energy since then."

A. M. Harvey, of Houston, Texas, chose not to sleep with the opposite sex. "I was born this way," she told Venus, "but is anyone still the same as they were when they were born? I don't think so. We live our lives according to where experiences take us."

Tamira Augustine, 25, shed light on a third possibility. "I don't know if I was born this way, but I don't think I decided to be gay. When I was 11, I thought Micheal Jackson was God, but when I was 14 I had my first "[wet] dream" and that was about Janet Jackson. That's when I realized I [might be a lesbian.]

Twenty-eight year old James McKissic

Venus Readers POLL
Were You Born This Way?

"I was born this way. However I do not recall the day where I decided to not sleep with the opposite sex (after being pressured by family to do so). It was not a hard decision to make. I just never stopped playing house with other little girls where I was "the daddy." Once I had sex with a woman vs. a girl...it was over!"
Monika M. Pickett
Sales Manager
National Society of Black Engineers

"I tried to convince myself that I wasn't born this way, that something caused me to be this way. I struggled for years with questions. Was the fact that I grew up without a father an issue? I knew other gay/bi men that had the traditional family upbringing, and they were still gay. Them having a father and being exposed to fixing cars, being manly, learning the ins and outs of football, and liking "straight" activities still produced a gay/bi male.

Was it a spirit that infested me or the devil trying to bring me down by making me settle for being less of a man? I tried being Pentecostal. I was in the Church of God in Christ. I spent 4 years trying to absorb and believe that bull (you said be honest), and it didn't help me deal with what I was going through. I spent years (and too much mental and emotional energy) suppressing the urges and putting my feelings into a file in the brain, trying to lock it away. It couldn't be a spirit because I could remember from when I was a young boy, the natural feeling that I felt of being attracted to the same sex, before I later was taught that it was wrong. I also know that I'm not going to burn in Hell for feeling this way."
Sean, 29
Detroit, Michigan

"Why are you taking this ridiculous survey? Uplift the people instead of speaking to some bizarre marketing niche."
Shante T. Smalls
New York City

"I don't think it was choice for me or else I would not have chosen to disappointment my mother. I think what we choose is how we handle coming out and our feelings with about ourselves and community."
Roxanne, 23

"What I choose to do is accept who I am and fully integrate all of myself into my personality in order to be emotionally, spiritually, and physically healthy. I choose not to be ashamed of who I am."

recalled that: "I always knew that I was gay," he said, "but it was only late in life that I acquired the vocabulary to actually identify myself and my feelings."

Monique Jordan had been with men and was even engaged. However, women were always in the back of her mind and in her heart. She describes making love with a woman for the first time as a turning point. "I was just floored at how wonderful it was," she said. "She kissed me and our bodies just fell together. I vowed to myself that was the end for me. I had finally found the feeling that made me whole."

Cecile "Coco" Jackson, 46, who describes herself as a black/native American woman living in New York City, said she "made a conscious decision to become a lesbian because of the way I was being treated by men." Jackson explained that being bisexual was "too difficult when I came out in the 1970s: "men didn't respect me and wanted to do me and my lover; women didn't respect me because they felt if I dealt with men I must be dirty."

"Now 20-something years later, I'm back to being bi. I have learned that being yourself is more important than trying to please others."

Shelton Watson from Chicago, Illinois, in answer to our query said: "What I choose to do is accept who I am and fully integrate all of myself into my personality in order to be emotionally, spiritually, and physically healthy. I choose not to be ashamed of who I am." ■

Venus Readers POLL
Were You Born This Way?

"NO, I was not born this way. I remember the day when I was molested and forced on many times to perform sexual things on my neighbor and his cousin at an early age. I figured that if I did not want them to tell my family what I was doing, that if I had to do it, I might as well made myself enjoy it whenever they called. So I begin to like the treatment."
Michael Morton, 34

"I believe I was born with an attraction to people of the same gender, however I've never had a sexual relationship with a woman. I do wonder that if the gene which says a child is homosexual or not is located, will scientists use this as a means to eliminate the so-called 'gay gene' and try to make all children yet to be born all heterosexual?
Shurron Farmer, 28
Washington, DC

"I suppose that I would fall in line with your second choice being that I choose not to sleep with the opposite sex any more. It was not a choice that took much contemplation. I had been in a relationship for sometime with a man that I loved very much. We parted after college and my zest for men (which let me note was never hot like fire) left."
A. M. Harvey, 26
Houston, Texas

"I concluded that the reason there were no sparks [when I dated] women is because I most desired men. Once I said in my head, "maybe I'm gay" then I could think back at least to age 6 when I had fantasies about little girls AND little boys, while more willfully playing the 'b' game with the latter."
Todd Shaw, 36
Champaign, Illinois

"I was born this way but I can appreciate a good looking man when I see one. But to date or sleep with a man is simply not in my nature, the same way it is not in a straight woman's nature to date another woman."
Heather M. Brewer
Charleston, South Carolina

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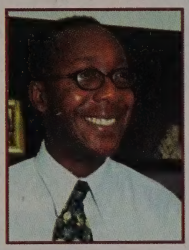
COLOURS is a non-profit organization. This project was made possible by the Centers for Disease Control and

HealthNews

Cornelius Baker and Rebecca Isaacs Lead National Health Coalition



The National Coalition for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Health announced that it has elected its first Co-Chairs. Cornelius Baker, Executive Director of Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, DC and Rebecca Isaacs, Director of Policy and Public Affairs for the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center will serve as the first national leaders of the new Coalition.

"I am very honored to have been selected as a Co-Chair of the Coalition," said Cornelius Baker. "We have a tremendous amount of work ahead of us to help improve the health of the LGBT community in the United States. Whitman-Walker Clinic is dedicated to working with federal, state and local health officials, with national and local health organizations and with LGBT advocacy groups to make sure that we achieve the goal of a healthy LGBT community nationwide." The Coalition was founded on October 14, 2000 by some 50 national, state and local organizations, is dedicated to bringing together the rich diversity of the LGBT community at a national level—across gender/gender identity, race/ethnicity, disability, education, income, age and geography. For info contact *www.wwc.org.*

Having Problems Adhering to HIV Drug Regimens? You're Not Alone.

Twenty years after the start of the epidemic, patients' "AIDS Battle Fatigue" is visible, with HIV+ individuals finding it difficult to comply with their drug regimens and looking to take fewer and better drugs, according to data from a survey conducted by Savitz Research and underwritten by GlaxoSmithKline.

A total of 62 percent of the 292 HIV+ respondents who are taking medication said it is somewhat or very difficult to adhere to their prescribed anti-HIV/AIDS drug plan. The major obstacle to complying with treatment every day is "too many pills," cited by 67 percent of those responding, followed by side effects (61 percent), food restrictions (55 percent), frequency of having to take the pills (49 percent) and timetable for having to take the pills (48 percent). One percent noted cost as an obstacle. Many reported the drug regimen interferes with their daily life (43 percent) or lifestyle (30 percent) as well as their job (11 percent).

"Adherence is of particular concern with HIV/AIDS because strict adherence is essential to suppress the virus and prevent it from developing mutations, causing resistance to drugs and leading to treatment failure," says Charles Farthing, M.D., of AIDS Healthcare Foundation in Los Angeles. "That means, without a very high level of adherence—most believe in excess of 95 percent—drug treatments will ultimately fail and patients will progress in their disease."

Many HIV/AIDS treatment plans, particularly those for people with more advanced disease, include 20 or more pills per day, consisting of anti-HIV drugs and medications to manage related infections, nutritional deficiencies, pain, fatigue, depression, insomnia and side effects such as nausea and diarrhea. Each of these drugs has its own schedule and dosage requirements, many drugs have food and water restrictions. However, HIV drug therapy is by no means always complicated-with some patients on regimens of 1-3 pills twice a day.

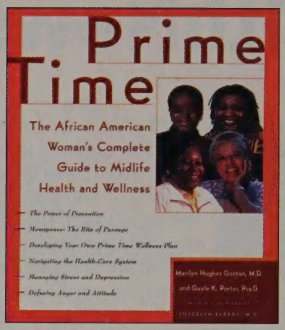
Research shows that 80 percent of patients admit missing some doses at certain times. In one study, approximately 40 percent had missed a dose in the previous 3 days, explaining that they forgot, they were feeling sick, didn't have the drugs with them at the right time, or they were too busy.

New Health Guide for Women with HIV

The Department of Health and Human Services, DHHS, has released A Guide to the Clinical Care of Women with HIV, believed to be the first manual specifically written for the medical treatment of women with HIV. The manual provides practical, experience-based advice and authoritative treatment guidelines for clinicians treating women with HIV.

"This new manual could not be more timely," DHHS Secretary Tommy G.Thompson said. "HIV infection among women has become the fifth leading cause of death among women between the ages of 25 and 44. Information in this guide will help clinicians improve treatment and save the lives of HIV-positive women and their babies."

Recent statistics confirm HIV's increasing threat to women. Of the 43,517 new cases of HIV in the United States reported from July 1999 through June 2000, 24 percent were among women. Even more ominously, in the 32 states with confidential HIV reporting, adolescent and young women in the 13-24 age group make up more than half of the new cases of HIV infection. In 1985, by contrast, women represented just 6 percent of the reported 10,000 U.S. AIDS cases.

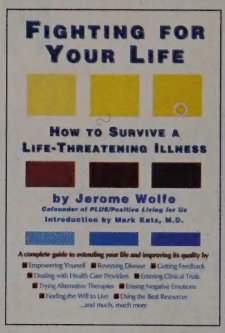

Prime Time
The African American Woman's Complete Guide to Midlife Health and Wellness
Marilyn Hughes Gaston, M.D.
and Gayle K. Porter, Psy.D.

Prime Time, The African American Women's Complete Guide to Midlife Health and Wellness

by Marilyn Hughes Gaston, M.D. and Gayle K. Porter Psy.D.

One World, ISBN 0-345-43215-0

The first book of it's kind, Prime Time focuses on improving the health of African American aged 40-75. Before now, not much was know about menopause and the health risk of declining estrogen levels in women. This book delivers the information and tailors it specifically to African American women. The authors' are from the medical and mental health worlds. This combination works to make this important book wholistic in its approach. Each author shares their own midlife stories—a technique that successfully personalizes the book. The scarcity of references to African American lesbians is contrasted by the impact of the information. For example 70 percent of health care providers stated they felt uncomfortable treating lesbians and rates of depression in Black lesbians are comparable to gay males with AIDS.



Fighting for Your Life: How to Survive LifeThreating Illness

by Jerome Wolfe

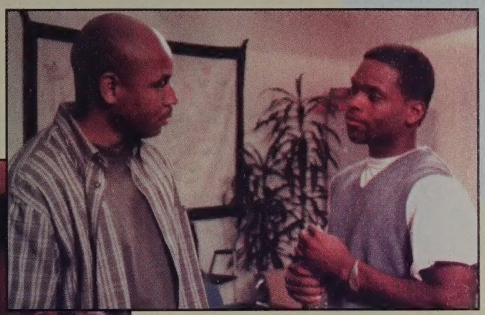
WH, ISBN 0-9676296-0-8

Although this is a first book, Jerome Wolfe is a veteran in the field of disease reversal Research in his book shows that it is not "good patients" (the ones who never question the medical establishment) but the "difficult" ones who are more likely to survive a life-threatening illness. According to Wolfe, "Difficult patients take charge of their own healing campaigns and become actively engaged in the full spectrum of healing modalities." These options range from changing doctors, hospitals and treatments to the use of stress reduction, alternative therapies, emotional and spiritual support, and lifestyle choices. Wolfe includes self-evlauation exercises or guided visualizations at the end of most chapters. These allow readers to choose their best options and become empowered. The book includes web sites, hotlines, and recommended reading.

This *summer*... what are you *planning* to do with your one *wild* and *precious* life?
Gay Spirit Camp
www.gayspiritcamp.com
1-800-553-8235

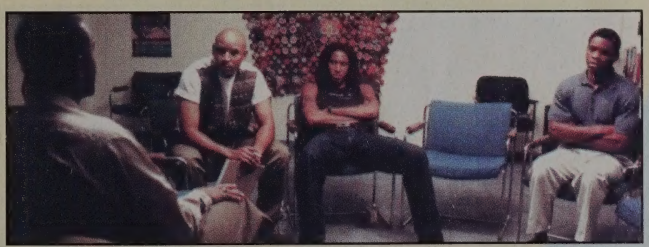
Kevin's Room Rocks

Black gay/bi men in film explore the realities of HIV issues, family, & relationships.



Drama!

Teddy (Malik Middleton) tells Charles (Perry Cavitt) about his recent experience attending an all gay church service. Paris, (Byron Stewart, center) flirtatiously offers the chef's special to patrons (Christopher Nolen and C.C. Carter). Below, Perry Cavitt as Charles, Da'Non Bolden as Pharaoh and Malik Middleton as Teddy attend Kevin's discussion group.



Lora Branch and Black Cat Productions have got a hit on their hands. **Kevin's Room**, an hour long black gay drama has rocked film festivals coast to coast – selling out at New York City's Gay & Lesbian New Festival this summer and featured on Chicago's UPN station last spring.

"Everyone whose seen it wants it," says Branch, the Public Health Director of the Office of Lesbian and Gay Health for the City of Chicago. and the film's producer.

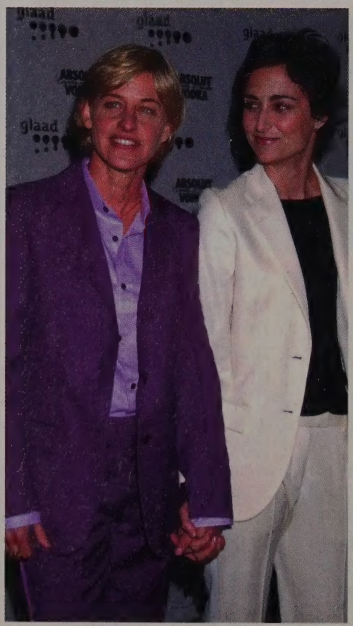
Kevin's Room is the first HIV prevention drama that addresses gay relationships, testing, HIV drug adherence and sexual risk among African American men. The story unfolds in a Chicago community where Kevin, an HIV counselor– played by Keith Butler, fears losing his program funding if black gay men don't show up for his discussion group soon. In the nick of time, three guys answer his ad and discover how different their lives and expectations are. Kevin's lover, Jhalil, played by Sanford Gaylor, gives new meaning to the word 'commitment.' Both are experienced actors and turn out a powerful performance in the name of black same-gender love.

Byron Stewart, artistic director of Chicago drama troupe **A Real Read**, portrays a humorous Paris who on more than one occasion has to be rescued by Felicia, a lesbian friend played by Real Read's Ronda Bedgood.

Teddy, played by Malik Middleton, a bisexual church loving man, attempts to heal himself from his pastor's rejection. He finds a new home at the true-to-life Church of the Open Door.

The film is a joy to watch. Rare glimpses into modern day Black gay life make **Kevin's Room** a collector's item. Branch's goal is send a copy to every organization or church that requests it. "We want to get it out there to train community based organizations, medical providers and AIDS service providers." To order call (312) 747-9805 or *www.ci.chi.il.us/health.*

glaad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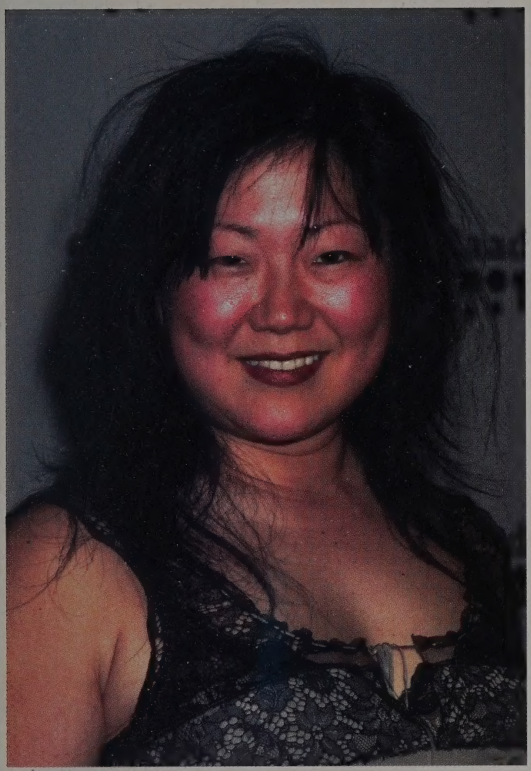

GLAAD Honors Paris Barclay at 12th Annual Media Awards in LA

The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) honored the best in film, television, journalism, music and theater at the 12th Annual GLAAD Media Awards presented by ABSOLUT VODKA at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles.

At ceremonies held at the Century Plaza Hotel, Jimmy Smits presented director/producer/writer Paris Barclay ("The West Wing," "ER") with the Stephen F. Kolzak Award. The award, named after a highly successful Los Angeles casting director who devoted the last part of his life to fighting AIDS-phobia and homophobia within the entertainment industry, honors a lesbian or gay member of the entertainment or media community for his/her work toward eliminating homophobia.

Other guests and presenters included: Ellen DeGeneres (bottom left) with her new girlfriend]; k.d. lang and Megan Mullally, (center); Margaret Cho [above]; Sheryl Lee Ralph and Kerr Smith ("Dawson's Creek")(bottom right). The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) is dedicated to promoting and ensuring fair, accurate, and inclusive representation of individuals and events in all media as a means of eliminating homophobia and discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation.

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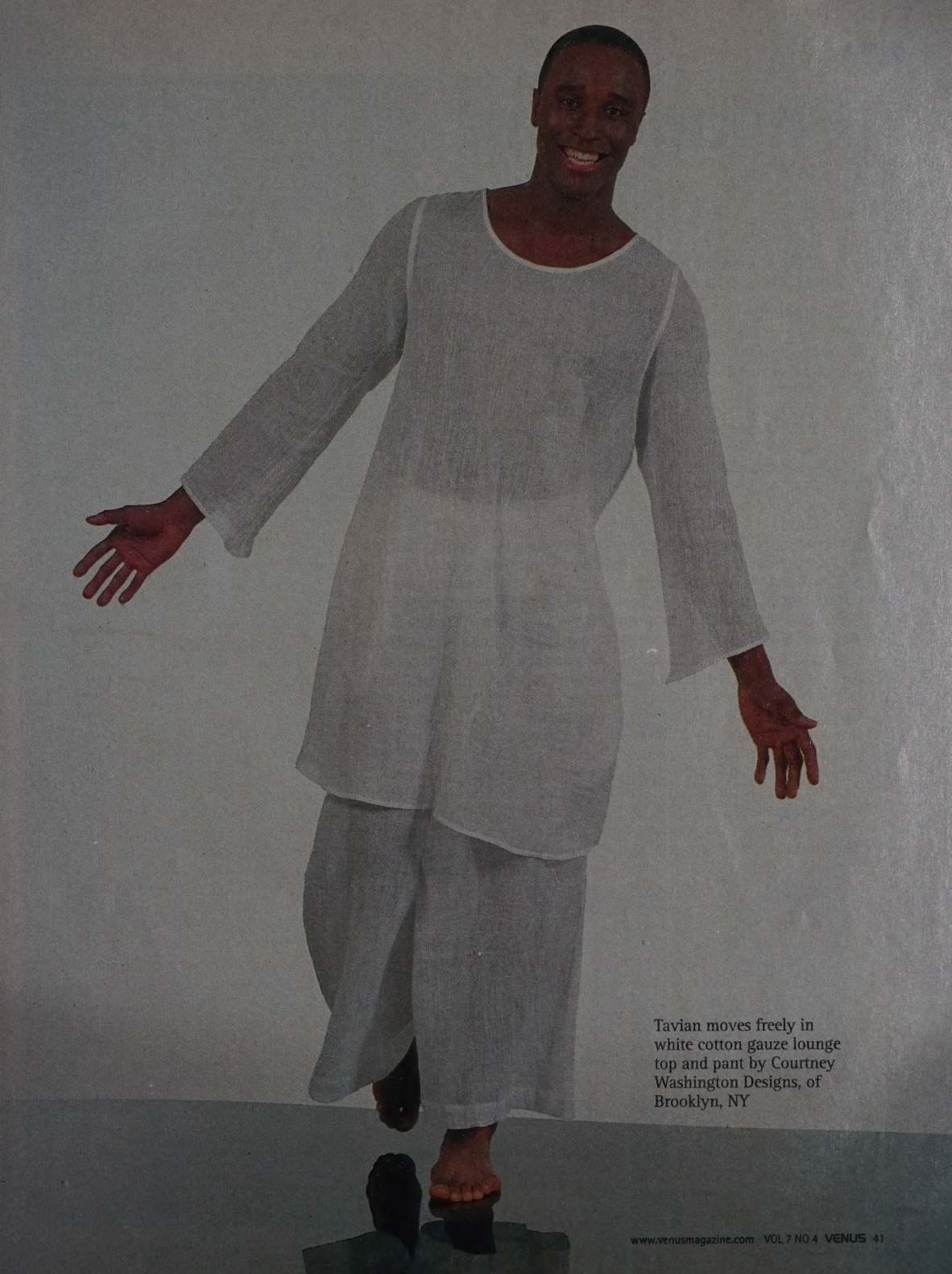
Peace.

Photographed Exclusively for Venus by Cy Karrat.
Styling by Jerry Jordan-Brown.
Hair & Makeup by
J. D. Murphy and Andre Jone.



Tavian moves freely in white cotton gauze lounge top and pant by Courtney Washington Designs, of Brooklyn, NY

Philadelphia

Legendary singers—Marian Anderson and Billie Holiday—fine arts, fascinating history and religious freedom are all a part of the Philadelphia story. Treat yourself to the city's finest restaurants, museums and attractions or catch a hometown concert of R&B diva Jill Scott. Philadelphia is easily accessible from the eastern seaboard—30 minutes by Amtrack from Manhattan—or a change-of-pace get-a-way from anywhere. There's so much to see and do you'll wonder why you hadn't arrived years ago. Here are the Venus picks for a grand weekend stay.

Freedom Theatre

The state's oldest and nation's largest African American theater, Freedom Theatre is recognized as a leading voice in black theatre. Housed in a majestic Italianate mansion on North Broad St., the facility includes a 300-seat state-of-the-art theatre which opened in 1999.
(215) 765-2793
www.freedomtheatre.org

The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts

Dubbed the crown jewel of Philadelphia's cultural renaissance, the Kimmel Center, designed by internationally renowned architect Rafael Vinoly and acoustician Russel Johnson, will showcase talented local arts groups and present visiting performers from around the world. Opening December 16, 2001, it will house Verizon Hall, the 2500-seat orchestra hall; the more intimate 650-seat Perelman Theatre; a 150-seat studio and rehearsal space; and the Merck Arts Education Center. Also onsite will be a rooftop terrace, an all-weather town square cafe', restaurant and gift shop.
(215) 790-5808, www.rpac.org

Bluzette Restaurant

Owner, Delilah Winder opened Bluzette last August. It's one of Philly's hottest restaurants and nightspots. The menu is rich in Caribbean and Latin American flavors, and deserts such as sweet potato cheesecake are not to be missed! The bar specializes in tropical drinks made with fresh fruits and is stocked with a variety of island beers and wines. Bluezette,
246 Market St. (215) 627-3866.

The Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection

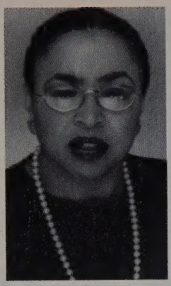
The preservation of black history has become the life work of Charles L. Blockson. He has written several books and spent more than 40 years amassing one of the nation's largest private collections of items relating to black history and traditions. The Collection of which he is curator, is a part of the Special Collections Department at Temple University and contains over 100,000 books, pamphlets, manuscripts, prints, drawings, sheet music, broadsides, posters and artifacts spanning nearly four centuries.
(215) 204-5197
www.library.temple.edu/blockson

Scriven Signature Jewelry & Metalworks

Keith Scriven creates signature jewelry and metal works at his shop at 1602 Spruce St. In 2000, Keith won the "Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award" from Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. In 1994, he expanded his business and opened Dizyners Gallery where he showcases the work of emerging and established fine artists.
(215) 545-8820

The Philadelphia Dance Company

9 North Preston St.
Philadanco Way
Philadelphia, PA 19104-2210
(215) 387-8200



AAMP
THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM IN PHILADELPHIA

Terri Rouse, AAMP President and CEO

An absolute must while you're visiting is the African American Museum in Philadelphia. It's exhibit, **Contemporary Romanticism** runs through September 2nd. The exhibit focuses on the work of four nationally acclaimed artists –Louis Delsarte, Howardina Pindell, Bettye Saar and Richard Watson–who utilize a variety of media–collage, painting, watercolor, drawing, photo silk-screen, printmaking–to interpret their dreams, explore historical truths and revisit ancestral memories.

President and CEO, Terrie Rouse, recently added nine new board members on the heels of a very successful year. "Raising the standards of AAMP means better exhibitions and better programming, which will enable us to do our job better," she says. "Educating through entertainment and incorporating exhibitions that move people emotionally will be the hallmark of AAMP."

The Museum also houses early African American memorabellia including an amazing collection of church fans and shoe shine boxes. Another exhibit interprets the influence of Hip hop on African American fashion and culture. Located at 701 Arch St, admission is $6 for adults and $4 for seniors. Call (215) 574-0380 or www.AAMPmuseum.org.

Gay SPIRIT Camp

Gay Spirit Camp 2001 is a series of retreats, workshops and social gatherings for men who love men, started on June 29 and extends through September 3, 2001, at Easton Mountain Retreat in upstate New York. Gay Spirit Camp offers a single location for and convenient access to programs run by national and regional leaders in the area of gay healing and spirituality.

Programs: Nationally known teachers, such as Joseph Kramer and John R. Stowe, will run many of the 18 programs at Gay Spirit Camp 2001. Sessions will include themes of: self-empowerment; erotic touch; massage and bodywork; Chakra energy; a naturist week; and customized spiritual workshops for Jewish men, Buddhists, and gay Catholic clergy. Gay Spirit Camp founder, John Stasio, will offer three of his popular programs during the summer.

Management: Gay Spirit Camp was founded by John Stasio, who is well known in the New England for the many workshops he has provided gay men over the years, through his Boston-based organization, Brothers Together. Stasio has spent more than 15 years as a personal coach, bodywork therapist and writer, helping people to realize their dreams and connect with their inner source of wisdom, well-being and joy.

Location: Easton Mountain Retreat is located in Easton, N.Y., about 30 miles north of Albany and 15 miles east of Saratoga Springs. It is easily accessible by train from Manhattan, by bus from Boston, by air (to Albany), or by interstate highway (I-87 from New York and Montreal; I-90 from Boston).

To Register: Program fees depend upon length of stay and choice of lodging. Workshop costs (including lodging) range from $145 per person for weekend segments to $640 for weekday continuations. Lodging options include dorm-like housing in geodesic domes or tent camping. Discounts for early registration (before May 15, 2001) and for multiple programs are offered. Details on each of the programs are available at: http://www.gayspirit-camp.com/programs. Registration may be arranged online, or by calling 1-800-553-8235.

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Continued from page 22

he was on the fence about the issue and didn't want to deal with it.

Venus Magazine contacted Adams for confirmation May 7, 2001. The bishop claims that he does not remember saying anything to Watkins about the newspaper article, but says he told him there were too many ordained clergy in the South Florida area and that was the reason the board rejected him. Nevertheless, they ordained two other candidates at the time.

Adams also stated that any conference could reject a candidate for any reason at all and never give any written explanation. When asked if it were theoretically possible for a candidate to never learn the reasons for rejection, he responded, "Madam! Madam! I don't want to get any further into this controversy. . . . You are making arguments and I am not going to respond to arguments." The October 26, 2000 edition of the Miami New Times quotes Adams as saying in an article about Watkins, "'The church position is clear . . . If a person is openly practicing homosexuality, we are unlikely to ordain them because [homosexuality] is not consistent with creation; it's not consistent with Scripture and the church.'"

Just before publication, Venus Magazine learned that Adams spoke to Greater Bethel's senior pastor, the Rev. John White, concerning the media attention surrounding Watkins. The precise substance of that conversation is not known, however, Watkins believes it entailed discussion of this article and his May 16 appearance on the cable program BET Tonight where the subject was "ex-gays." According to Watkins, White upbraided him on May 21 for attempting to learn why the Board of Examiners chose not to ordain him and said any further attempts at clarification would result in his dismissal. Furthermore, White summarily and immediately terminated Ministry of Reconciliation services at the church, leaving approximately 80 parishioners without a venue. Many were turned away at the door the following Sunday as they tried to attend. Attempts to reach White for comment were unsuccessful.

"I think he's not sure how to move forward at this point," Watkins surmises. If White does not know, Watkins and his congregants are finding a way. They have decided to meet in private homes for the time being and possibly move to a meeting hall if necessary. Some have noted the similarity between what they are doing and the way many churches start, including the AME Church.

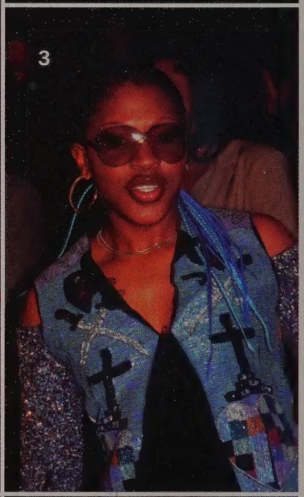
According to the website AME Today (http://www.ame-today.com), "[The AME Church] developed from a congregation formed by a group of Philadelphia-area slaves and former slaves who withdrew in 1787 from St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia because of discrimination." White trustees found black members of the church kneeling in prayer and told them they were forbidden to kneel in the building. After they finished praying, the black participants left the church, never to return.

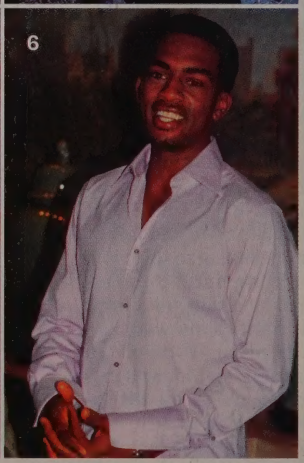
Prior to White's rebuke, Watkins considered moving to another conference within the AME Church to apply for ordination, perhaps one led by recently-elected Bishop Vashti McKenzie, the first female bishop in the denomination's 214-year history. However, McKenzie doesn't know if transferring and ordination would be that simple. Contacted while traveling between her conferences in Southern Africa, she said cultural differences may be a barrier. "In many parts of Africa, especially where I serve, sexuality is a subject that is not discussed openly . . . we even have problems discussing AIDS. So even to discuss sexual orientation publicly would be a major issue." She isn't sure what would happen if Watkins quietly lived his life and didn't bring up his orientation. "You have to call it as you see it once you have to face that issue. We have not had to face that issue."

Whatever may come, Watkins is determined that the lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered persons to whom he ministers will not be without a spiritual home. He has contacted the United Church of Christ to explore the use of one of their local facilities and about ordination. In addition, an Episcopal priest in the South Florida area previously expressed an interest in recruiting him for the Episcopal Church, USA. Both the UCC and the ECUSA are open and affirming to all, regardless of sexual orientation or expression.

"In many parts of Africa, especially where I serve, sexuality is a subject that is not discussed openly . . . You have to call it as you see it once you have to face that issue. We have not had to face that issue."

The AME Book of Discipline, the denomination's rule book, is silent on the issue of ordination for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people. According to Church Historian, Rev. Dr. Dennis Dickerson, the topic has never come up at the rule-making General Conference held every four years. He thinks that confronting the denomination on sexuality when most of its efforts involve assuring its members merely survive is unfair. However, with 2.5 million members in 40 countries in the Americas, Europe and Africa it is very surprising the church, as a body, has not tackled the issue before. The question appears moot for Watkins, however, it remains for the denomination as a whole: If not now, when? The answer depends on how many gifted people it is willing to lose. V





On The Red Carpet

at the Essence Awards, Madison Square Garden

Photography by Tina Paul

1. A seductive **Aaliyah** makes 'Fabulous' look easy.

2. D. L. Hugley plays it cool and keeps it real with his winning smile.

3. Lil' Mo represents for her Hip hop fashion conscious fans.

4. Yolanda Adams, the reigning 'Queen of Gospel,' works it in a down right sexy number.

5. Halle Berry selects simplicity in black, since taking it all off in her latest film, *Swordfish.*

6. Bill Bellamy of television's "Men, Women & Dogs" enjoys an All Star party at The Sheraton New York.

7. A stunning **Gladys Knight,** looks as though she owns the 'Fountain of Youth'; with husband William McDowell

7

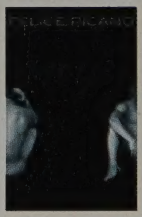
SummerReading
by Retha Powers

Great books provide a wonderful kind of spiritual sustenance. Here's my take on the best reads this summer:

We should all read **The Good Book** by Peter Gomes. Gomes' knowledge of the bible and his indisputable credentials as a scholar provide us the reassurance, true understanding and ammunition for responding to homophobic community or family. And if you're in need of a daily pick me up Keith Boykin's **Respecting the Soul: Daily Reflections for Black Lesbians and Gays** which feature pearls of wisdom from the likes of James Baldwin and Lorraine Hansberry as essential as a morning bowl of cereal.

Combine incisive observations about class, race, sexuality identity and a wicked knack for social satire and you've only begun tap into the wonder that is Han Ong's **Fixer Chao**. The story begins when William Narcisco Paulinha, a Philippine-American who is also a recently reformed hustler meets the dubious writer Shem C.. Shem C. convinces Paulhina to assume the identity of a Feng Shui Master. As he dupes the rich and famous with his skills garnered from a pamphlet Paulhina steps into a hilarious and shocking web. If the Oscar nominated film **Before Night Falls** hasn't drawn you to the work of Renaldo Arenas be sure to order a copy of the gorgeous Triangle Classics edition.

This special edition which includes an introduction by the poet and novelist's dear friend Felice Picano is available only from www.insightoutbooks.com. Picano has a new novel of his own. **Onyx** tells the story of Ray and Jesse, a couple Jesse's slow decline from AIDS and the pull of love and family that includes Ray's niece and nephew and arrival Jesse's spiteful mother. As usual, Picano takes on life's big questions in beautiful prose.

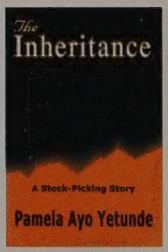


In **Troublemaker and Other Saints** first time author, Christina Chiu, depicts the mosaic of the Chinese Diaspora in this compelling collection of interlinked short stories. In "Doctor" a Chinese-American is at odds with her family because she married a black man. Another story finds parents consoling their young daughter whose lover has left her. In "Star" a mother fights to stay in her gay son's life by joining him and his lover for Garbo movies.

Lot's of celebrities are writing books like Melissa Etherige whose memoir is just out, so why shouldn't Billy Doll have a book too? **Big Fun With Billy** is a photographic romp into the lives of Billy, his boyfriend Carlos and his best friend Tyson.

Brothers, are you changing the personal pronouns of horoscopes in order to understand your fate? **Gay Astrology** provides a respite from such noodling so you can focus on more important things like whether or not you should date that Leo.

Who knew James Bond had a lesbian sister? And where was she for that famous scene with *Pussy Galore*? Find out all about Jane in the parody Jane Bond: **Kiss the Girls and Make them Spy.** And finally, there's great news for E. Lynn Harris fans. His latest **Any Way the Wind Blows**—a tale of a power couple whose past threatens their nuptial plans-- hits stores in July. ■

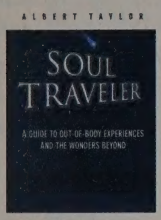


The Inheritance
Pamela Ayo Yetunde
Marabella Books, ISBN 1-928775-04-7
The author, an investment consultant teaches us with unique storytelling that investing blindly in the stock market has its consequences. Yetunde provides practical guidelines for building a stock portfolio and understanding the stock market, like how the market works, how to research a company in an afternoon, and when to buy or sell. Whether you have inherited stock or want to create an inheritance for your family's future, The Inheritance is a must read for anyone interested in building wealth.

Whom Shall I Fear
A Spiritual Journey of a Battered Woman
Lavon Morris-Grant
MCS Publishing, Email Orders: Morgra1@frontiernet.net

This compelling true story of one woman's strength and courage of faith that guided her through the darkest path of domestic violence, attempted murder and suicide was written by New Jersey native who with poignancy and grace triumphs over abuse.

Soul Traveler
A Guide to Out-of-Body Experiences and the Wonders Beyond
Albert Taylor
Dutton , ISBN 0-525-94447-8
Can out-of-body experiences help to shape our destinies? In this book the author gives an amazing ac-



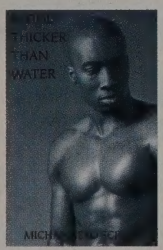
count of his own experiences into the tunnel of the unconscious mind.

From an early age, Taylor's sleep was frequently disrupted be episodes of death-like paralysis accompanied by extremely lucid dreams. "My grandmother called them 'witch rides'." His later quest to diagnose what was wrong with him revealed that these were early indications of his facility of out-of-body experiences also known as astral projection. Overjoyed to have an explanation for this frightening phenomenon, Taylor eventual came to a deeper understanding of his own role on Earth and the meaning of life and death.

Blood Thicker Than Water

Michangelo Scruggs

Footprint Media, ISBN 0-9708996-0-2



In this a novel, a heart breaking pager turner about sibling reality, Oz Jamison and his sister grow apart and eventually come to find hatred for one another. As a black gay man, Oz struggles to maintain as he deals with AIDS, loss of his lover and non-acceptance. His sister Ruth makes her distastes for homosexuals no secret. In an instant both siblings find themselves fighting to save Ruth's life. Oz risks his own to save her.

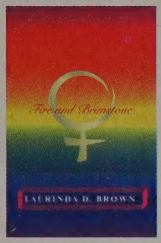
Fire and Brimstone

by Laurinda D. Brown

Creative Enterprises,

ISBN 0-9710019-0-1

This debut novel was written by native Memphian and Howard University graduate Laurinda D.Brown. This gritty urban novel explores lesbianism, Black motherhood, economic status, same sex domestic violence and intra-racial caste systems among AfricanAmericans. Through their relationship, a single mother of two and a Minister of Music face issues of homosexuality and spirituality, sex and love and family relationships. The novel is set agains a backdrop of traditional Southern mores, and reminds us that lesbians are everywhere, including Black churches.

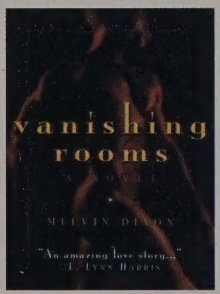


Vanishing Rooms

By Melvin Dixon

Cleis, ISBN 1-57344-123-6

Prior to his early death from AIDS in 1992, when Melvin Dixon was on the verge of winning acclaim as a brilliant new novelist, his talent was likened to Toni Morrison and James Baldwin. In Vanishing Rooms, the author amply demonstrates his literaty promise with a compelling love story set in Manhattan's West Village of the 1970's. Melvin taught writing at Columbia University, Williams College and others. His poetry and short stories have appeared in Terry McMillan's collection Breaking Ice, the Men on Men series, and Shade: Writings by Gay Men of African Descent.



Jesse Durand, a black dancer, has two passions: his dancing and his boyfriend, Metro. Upon relocating to New York, however, the couple finds their relationship radically challenged. Metro turns to drugs and rough sexual encounters with strangers, leaving Jesse confusedand unable to come to terms with his ovber's sudden change in personality. When Metro is murdered by gay-bashers, Jesse is pushed further into an emotional darkness., Turning to his dance parner, Ruella, an African American woman who is facing her own set of personal challenges, for support, Jesse strives to oversome his anguish by discovering the inspiration necessary to move forward with his life.

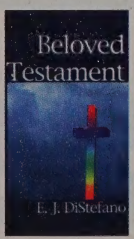
How to Ruin the Perfect Child

Antonio Le Mons

IUniverse.com, ISBN 0-595-12870-X

Set in Detroit, How to Ruin The Perfect Child is the story of Aprielle Hamilton, a no-nonsense cosmetic giant who has succeeded in transforming herself from her poverty stricken past oas April Louise Johnson. Her final task is to insure that at least one of her twin sons, Maximillian or Montgomery, is prepared to carry on the Hamilton legacy that she has worked so assidously to create.

Maximillian, a renowned physician, has managed to marry beneath himself, while his reckless brother, Montgomery has fathered an illegitimate child that he's raising with another man. However disappointing these transgressions, they pale in comparison to what's revealed when the sudden and gruesome death of one of the boys unearths the agonizing truth that threatens to destroy everything Aprielle has built.



Beloved Testament

by E.J. DiStefano

1stBooks.com

Self published by ex-gay basher and right wing republican, E.J. DiStefano, the book offers a daring interpretation of the Gospels. "My objective with this novel is to promote the belief that our homosexual brothers and sisters are entitled to pursue an unfettered personal relationship with their God on their own terms, as we all are.

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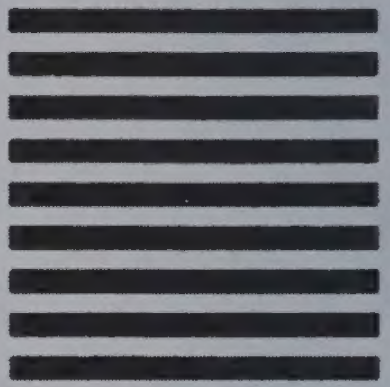

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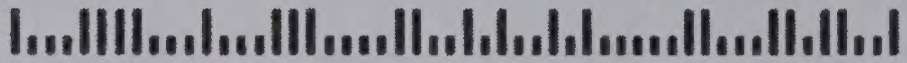

Funds OR Stocks?

Q: I just inherited several thousand dollars from my parent's estate and I'm ready to invest. Should I go with all stocks or all mutual funds?

A: It depends on the dollar amount you're willing to invest initially. As a general rule, if you are starting with less than $20,000 your portfolio should contain only no-load mutual funds. If your portfolio is more than $20,000 then maybe you are ready for an all-stock portfolio, depending on the time you can commit to research and your sophistication. Consider the following points:

1. Diversification–If you have less than $20,000, you should be in no-load mutual funds for several reasons - diversification being the most important. By spreading a portfolio over many investments you can avoid excessive exposure to any one source of risk.

2. IPOs - Everyone is trying to get in on the latest IPO, but very few get in at the initial offering price. Most get in at the first trading price, which is usually significantly higher than the IPO price. Take Martha Stewart for example, it was offered at $18, first traded at $37 and traded as high $49 on its first day and is now trading at around $26. The large institutions that got in at the offer price have a 44% gain. For the small investor who got in the first day of trading is sitting on a loss between–29% and 46%. Although many individual investors are in the red from recent IPO offerings, mutual funds have made better returns because of the initial priceat the time of investment.

3. Capital Gains Tax–If you will be investing less than $2,000 a year, or less than $166 per month, you should be only in no-load mutual funds. And, if you are going to be in funds, then you should hold them in a ROTH-IRA. The ROTH is a tax-free holding account that you can hold stocks or mutual funds inside. You cannot contribute more than $2,000 per year in a ROTH. The ROTH is beneficial for the small investor because you don't pay any capital gains tax on your earnings.

On the other hand, if you are an investor with a sizeable portfolio, $20,000 or more, it might make more sense to be in individual stocks. Also you have direct control over your tax liability, meaning if you don't sell a stock there is no tax liability.

For the small investor, its more practical to use no-load mutual funds instead of stocks to gain stock market exposure due to costs, diversification, the nature of the IOP market and capital gain issues.

Dale Bryant, M.B.A., is the Portfolio Manager for The Bryant Group, LLC a Black-owned investment firm in New York.

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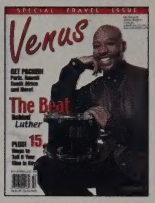

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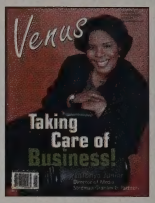

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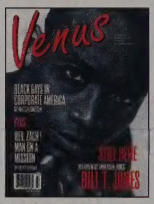

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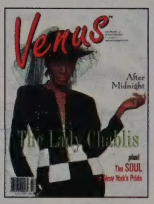

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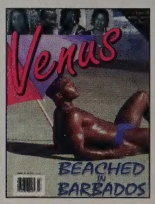

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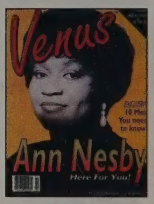

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Hot Fudge Works

It started with a phone call. Quisha Lawson. Adi Cummings, Linda Pino, Aleah Long, Alexis Suter and Bobby Berry were members of Miche Bradens Performance Arts Chorale, known as the PAC. After launching a record company Braden decided call it quits but the members of the high powered performance group decided they were just getting started.

"We were all kind of thinking the same thing," said Bobby Berry, "so one phone call at a time, we decided to revamp our act and take it back to the stage!" A recent New York preview performance at the Triad Theater opened to a packed house and the audience was not disappointed. HFW performed a couple of old standards and kept the audience on the edge of their seats with new material and the kind of top notch entertainment that is expected. Linda Pino and Alexis Suter offer the strongest lead vocals, with Adi Cummings and Bobby shoring up the acting and comedy routines. Quisha Lawson and Aleah Long add glamour and sultry voice to complete the total package. HFW will be back at the Triad Theater in mid-July. You can contact HFW by calling our hotline: (212) 352-4063, or visit http://members.aol.com/hotfudgeworks/index.html

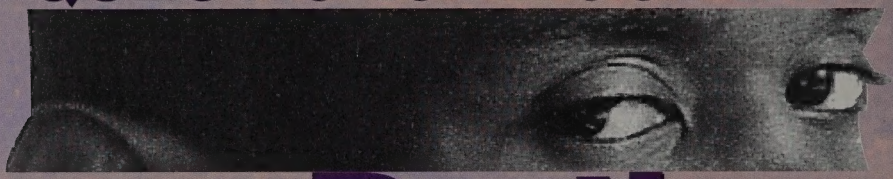
BLARE The Black LGBT Arts Report Celebrates 1 year

When author Keith Boykin decided to compile announcements into an e-zine, sent to him by men and women in his network, he knew that the report would be well received. "We want to make a loud noise that black gays and lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people are producing great work as writers, filmmakers, artists, musicians, and performers," he said in a recent Washington Blade article. What he didn't know was how much time organizing the e-zine would take away from his academic workload and personal life.

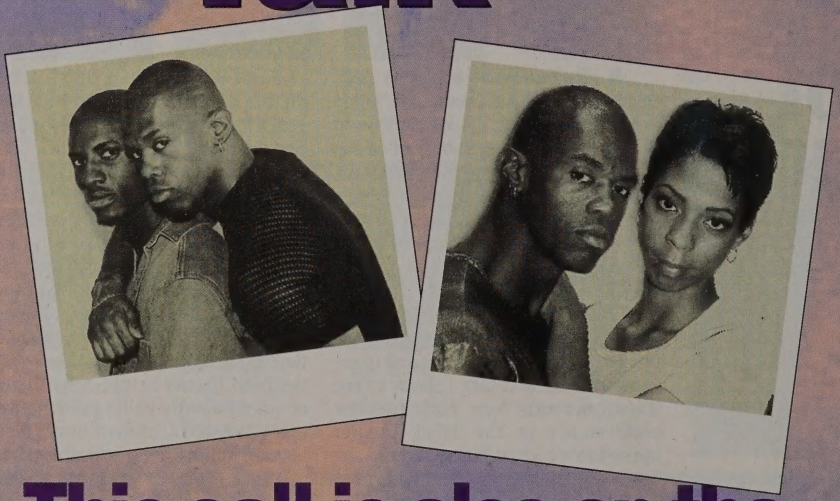
BLARE is now assembled and distributed twice a month by 26 year old David S. Neale from his home in Maryland. The Brown University graduate attended a Venus Media Reception during Washington D.C. Black Gay Pride and introduced his publication as one that helps to "engender" the community.

"I happen to see a connection between positive identity development and self esteem," Neale told Rhonda Smith of the Washington Blade. Neale said, "One of the ways [black Gay people] have coped is through the arts. Many of our strongest voices in the black LGBT community have been artists. To subscribe visit www.groups.yahoo.com/group/BLARE.

QUESTIONS ABOUT HIV?



Need a Brother to Talk to?



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Sex Talk

by Geanie Bond

Q&A

Q: I'm a lesbian and proud of whom I am. I dated guys in high school, to see if that's what I truly wanted and also to make my parents happy. My dad and I used to be great friends. Now he says that I'm no longer on his team. I love my father deeply and I know he loves me, too. How can we work on our relationship and rediscover our friendship.

Signed,
Daddy's Little Dyke

A: Dear Daddy's Little Dyke,

Take it Slowly. Just as "coming out" was and may still be a process for you, it, too, is a process for him. He will, like many parents, need to grieve the loss of "the heterosexual dream." This is a societal assumption, taken on by many, where parents often imagine and expect that their son or daughter will marry the opposite sex, have children, and the proverbial white picket fence.

Once this portion of the grief has occurred, parents may often begin to ask questions regarding a "gay lifestyle." Be prepared to answer questions but don't be defensive. Parents may be seeking to arrive at understanding. So, leave the door open.

It is important that you do not attempt to push sexual orientation upon your father. However, do continue to stand proudly in acceptance of yourself. Never hesitate to speak about your life and loves as "matter of factly" as you would if you were heterosexual. Let your father know that you love him, and yearn for the return of his friendship. Let him know that you are concerned about "his Issue" with homosexuality. Especially, since he, in fact, has a lesbian daughter.

Offer him your help toward further understanding. Get him a book and share a copy of Venus with him. Books, such as *Positively Gay by Betty Berzon* and *Is It A Choice?* by Eric Marcus, are informative and can help with the process. Encourage him to attend some meetings with Parents and Friends of Gays and Lesbians. Support for parents of African Descent can be found on the Links page of Venus' website at *www.venusmagazine.com.*

And, by all means, invite him into your world, in places where gay life is abundant, in restaurants, friend's homes, and events. Be positive, be loving, be patient. The main ingredient, here, for team-building is "time". How long is not as important—only that he arrives.

Geanie Bond is a licensed marriage and family therapist specializing in hypnosis and sex therapy. V

"It is important that you do not attempt to push sexual orientation upon your father. However, do continue to stand proudly in acceptance of yourself. Never hesitate to speak about your life and loves as 'matter of factly' as you would if you were heterosexual."

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Hotter Than July
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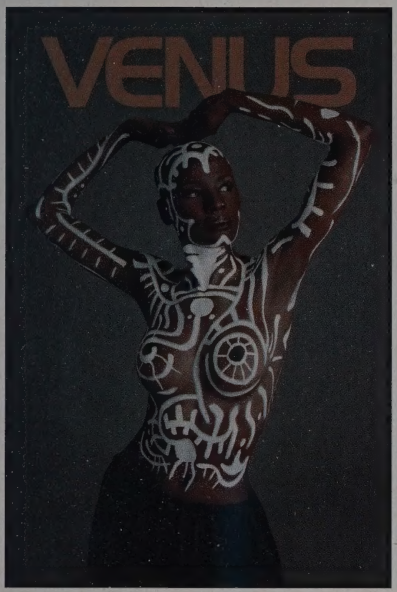

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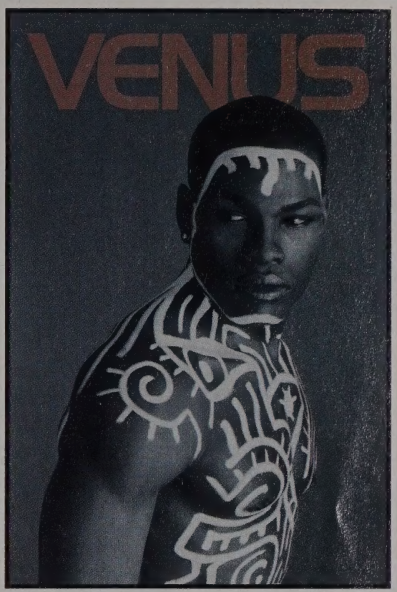

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The Rev. James Cleveland
1932-1991

James Cleveland was considered by many gospel enthusiasts to be the "King of Gospel," receiving four Grammys. The last awarded posthumously for the album *Having Church*. Cleveland was a charismatic singer who, to use a cliché, held the audience in the palm of his hands with his signature high and raspy voice.

He mesmerized his audiences and brought a standard of excellence to gospel music in general through his organization in 1968 of the Gospel Music Workshop of America, the largest gospel convention in the world.

Cleveland is credited for the architectural design of contemporary gospel music with top gospel choirs and for bridging the gap between traditional gospel, gospel quartets and today's gospel music.

Born on December 5, 1932 in Chicago, Illinois, Cleveland first sang gospel under the direction of Thomas Dorsey, father of gospel music, at the Pilgrim Baptist Church. Another Chicago luminary lit the way for Cleveland. Gospel singer and composer Roberta Martin inspired Cleveland to study piano.

In the 1950s, Cleveland began singing professionally. He joined the Gospelaires, a trio that cut several sides for the Apollo label and also worked with the famed Caravans. With the Caravans, Cleveland arranged and performed two hits, "The Solid Rock" and an up tempo reworking of the song "Old Time Religion."

His compositions were used by numerous Gospel groups, many of them becoming standards. In 1960 Cleveland formed the Cleveland Singers, featuring organist and accompanist Billy Preston, who would later become an R&B legend. The smash hit "The Love of God", with the Voices of Tabernacle of Detroit, won Cleveland nationwide fame within the gospel community.

Signing with the Savoy label, Cleveland and keyboardist Billy Preston released a long list of classic albums, including "Christ Is The Answer" and "Peace Be Still" with the Angelic Choir of Nutley, New Jersey. Many feel that with the 1962 "Peace Be Still" album, Cleveland started the 'traditional Black choir sound.'

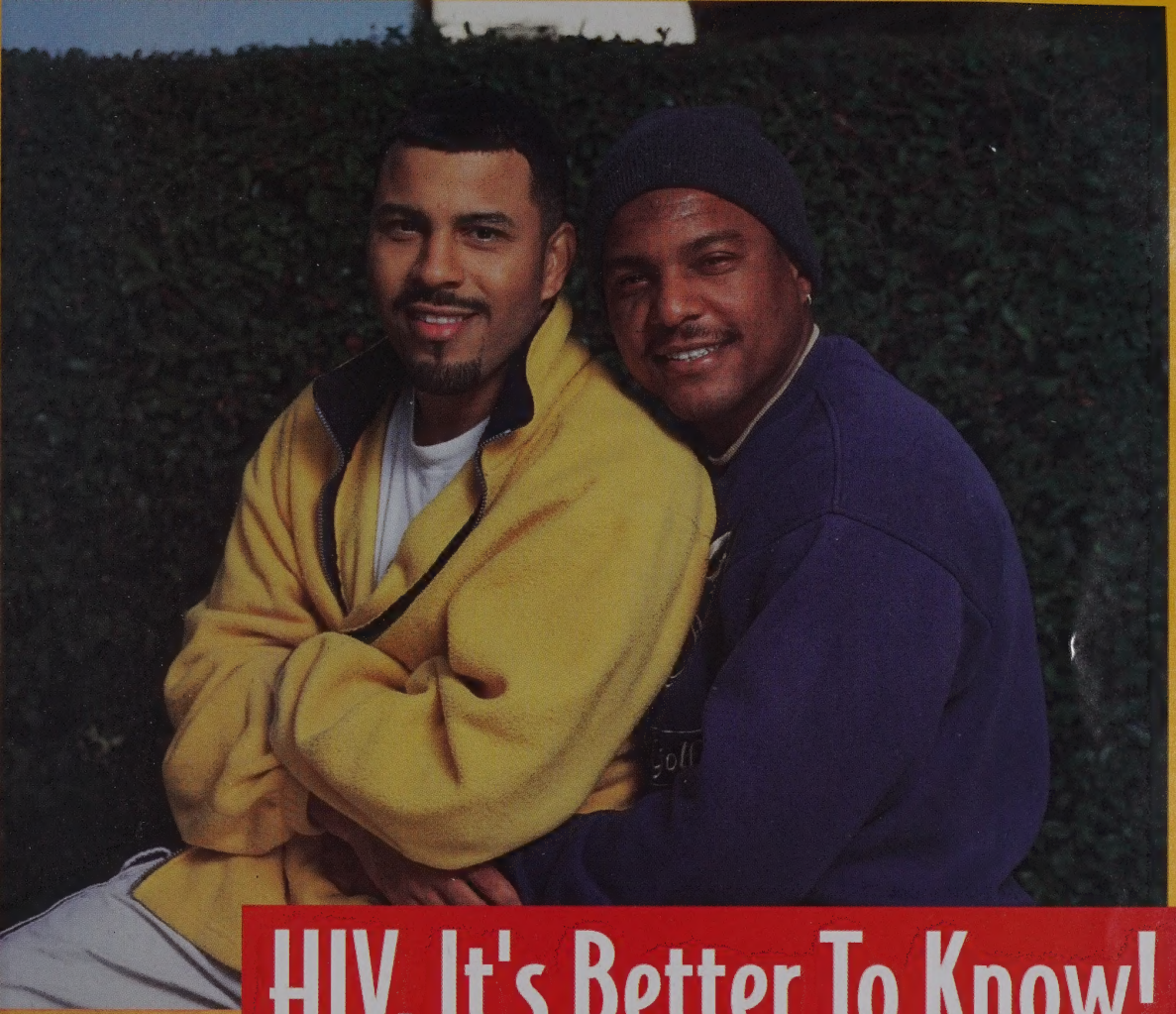
In 1972, Cleveland was reunited with Aretha Franklin as a guest artist on the album Amazing Grace. The album is the biggest selling gospel album of all time.

A recipient of the NAACP Image Award, Cleveland also acquired an honorary degree from Temple Baptist College.

Although the commercial trends of the 1980's had caused a down turn in Cleveland's career, he continued to perform the gutsy blues-based sound that brought him recognition from listeners throughout the world.

The Rev. Cleveland died February 9, 1991 in Los Angeles, California.

He was the most prolific and one of the most gifted composers of his generation, and that earned him the title "Crown Prince of Gospel." V



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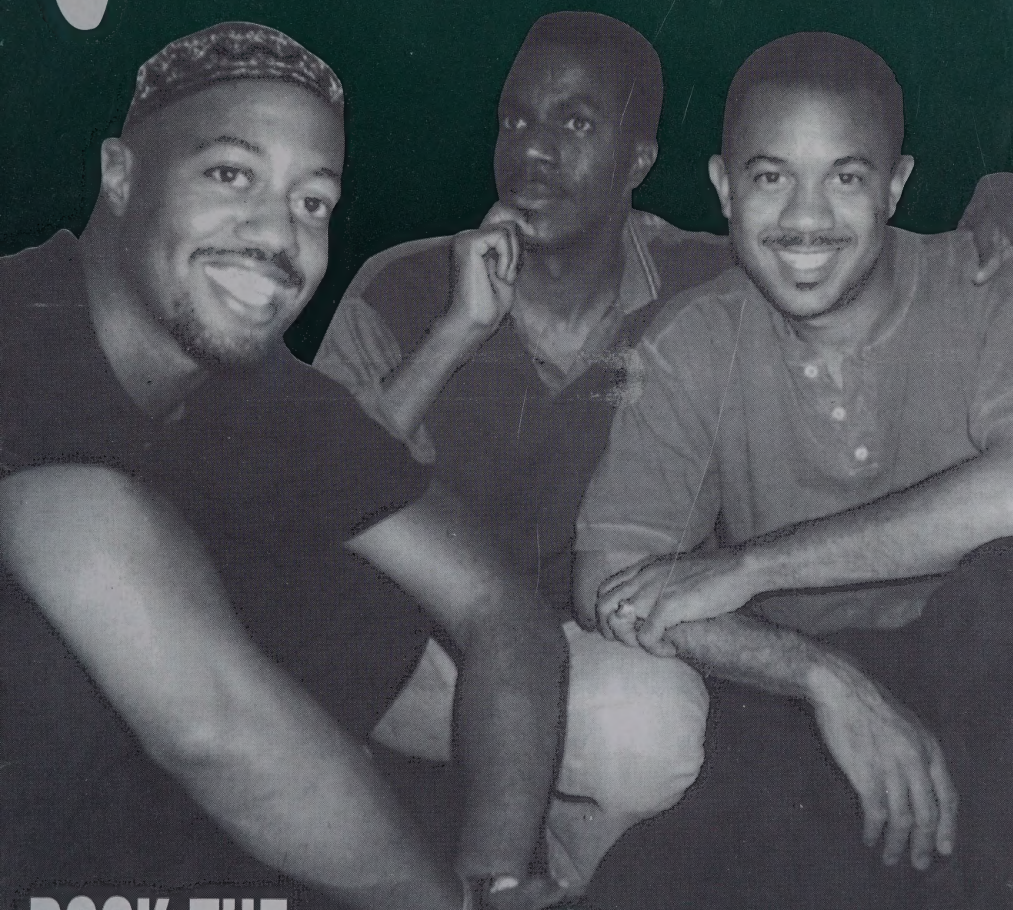

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SECOND SUNDAY

Discussing Black Gay Men

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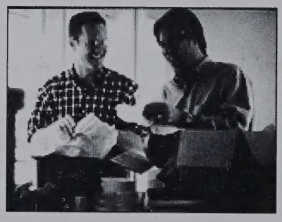

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LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

I really enjoy Venus magazine. It alerts me to the activities of the African American community within Atlanta and elsewhere. You and your staff are performing a great and wonderful service uniting gays and lesbians, informing each of us of the broad spectrum of our diversity...

All the best,

Penelope Williams, musician/producer.

DEAR EDITOR,

I'm a black gay male from South Florida. I had the fortune to visit Atlanta in June and I have decided to relocate to Atlanta! I happened to pick up a copy of VENUS in Ansley Square and I've never seen anything like it! I'm really interested in meeting people and learning more about Atlanta's Black Gay Community.

Sincerely,

D.J.Murphy

VENUS:

I picked up a copy from a friend of mine in NYC, and then I grabbed another copy at the National Association of Black Journalists in Nashville. I really love your work. Keep up the good work and I hope to submit a piece for a future issue.

Thanks,

Lee Jones

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for telling the inspiring story of Perry J. Watkins. I feel proud knowing that the first openly gay serviceman to defeat the ban against gays in the military was an African-American. Keep up the good work.

Hungry for History,

Geoffrey Flowers

Venus™ MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

October/November 1996
Vol. 2., No. 9

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by Jena P. Jones

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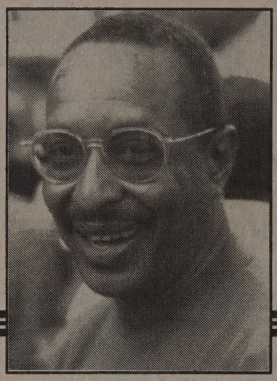

People are STILL talking about what a grand time they had in Atlanta for Labor Day during Black Gay Pride Weekend.

There was so much going on! Since we couldn't be everywhere at once we decided to seek out some of the storytelling about the weekend's activities.

All we can say is

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...Throw an after-party for Black lesbians over 60 and No They Didn't show up in stretch white limos!

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From The Editor

Charlene Cothran
Publisher/Editor

The best advice I've been given as a publisher is to 'Always be in a mode of progression'. That one statement has served as inspiration when things seemed to want to stand still. Venus started as a tiny lesbian events calendar. Sought after by local advertisers who recognized the need to connect with the black gay community she progressed into a monthly newsletter. In less than 12 months from the last published newsletter, Venus became Atlanta's first black gay free monthly magazine.

We are still in that mode of progression as we move Venus from the 'free' rack to news stands all over the country.

The news stand edition of Venus will be Hot and Exciting! The sizzling new format is designed to reach out and grab you and not let you go until you've devoured the issue from cover to cover! The New Venus is chalked full of exclusive interviews with your favorite entertainers, authors, politicians and religious leaders, starting with gospel singing sensation ANN NESBY on the cover of the 1997 Second Anniversary Edition.

As we remain focused on the magazine's mission to 'educate, inform and increase awareness and self esteem' we step out on faith in Full Color, fully expecting your critique and support. There are a number of things that we expect from you. We expect your subscription order immediately! We expect your participation in market surveys letting us know how we're doing and what you want , and what your spending habits are like. We expect you to encourage friends and relatives to read Venus. Most of all, we expect your response to articles and advertising. We're looking for your e-mail and letters about the things you liked or didn't like in each issue.

You're holding in your hands the last free copy of Venus, but that doesn't mean that a good thing has come to an end. It means that in the name of progress we know that you will continue to support us by purchasing your next copy of Venus at your favorite bookstore.

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PROFILE OF A WOMAN

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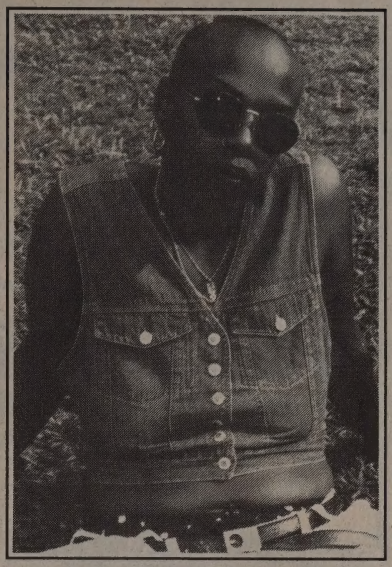
Age: 37

Status: . . . . Single

Career: . . . . Construction/ Demolition

Hometown: . Pittsburgh, PA

Latest Book:. "Lesbian Erotics" by Karla Jay



Squeeze-the definition according to each letter is S-Sexy for life, Q-Queen of desire, U-ultimate lover, E-erotic, E-edible, Z-zest for style, E-equal to none! I'm one proud black woman.

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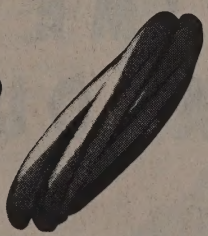

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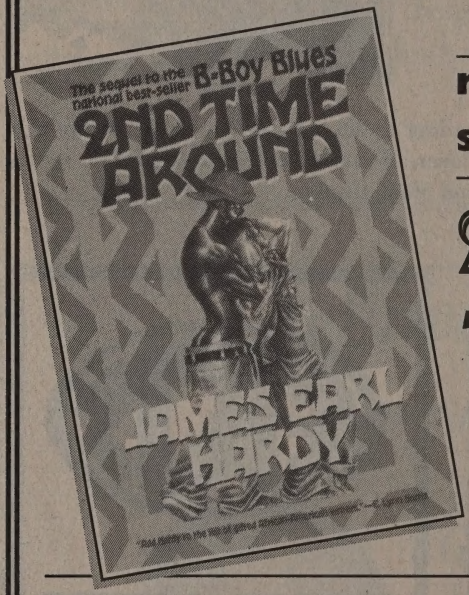

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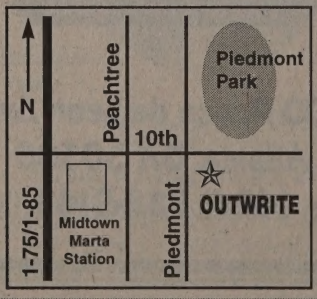

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The South's Source for Information On Our Lives.

SECOND SUNDAY

by Craig Washington

Second Sunday's mission statement defines the group as "a support organization created to assist the collective growth of gay, bisexual and transgendered men of African descent through educational, social, spiritual and cultural activities." They discuss scheduled topics that address a broad range of issues such as relationship maintenance, masculinity/femininity, ageism and others. As the name implies, the brothers congregate every second Sunday of each month. The regular meeting place was secured through an arrangement with Pastor S.F. Mahee of Unity Fellowship, Atlanta's only openly gay place of worship for the BG & L community.

On the second Sunday in November the group will host writer, James Earl Hardy, author of "2nd Time Around". The December meeting will host Atlanta's local black gay theatre/readers group, Adodi Muse. All gay men of color are welcome. For directions and other information call 404-325-7321.

Meetings open with announcements highlighting group activities and community events. Discussion is led by a predesignated facilitator who encourages participation through

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

"Solely by word of mouth, the group's popularity widened and its ranks expanded. Meeting formats became more varied, including panels, guest speakers, small group breakouts."

Venus classifieds

SUBMISSION CALL

GEMS publishing is calling for submissions about :Positive Gay and Lesbian Relationships Among People of Color. Publishing date: fall of 1997, long term relationships meaning 1 year or more. For general questions please call (954)463-1997. To request Information Package, send your name and complete mailing address to: GEMS Publishing 1636 North West 10th Avenue, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida 33311

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SECOND SUNDAY,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

exploration of the topic. Attendants are urged to use "I" statements and to speak from personal experience. Because of the sensitivity of information shared (such as HIV disclosure) the group requests discretion and confidentiality. Non-judgmentalism is another golden rule usually obeyed. The meetings are often high-spirited as participants are passionate about their concerns. And of course, everyone has an opinion which makes for lively conversation. To the group's merit, the brothers agree to disagree with vehemence, not venom.

At the discussion's end, donations are solicited through a passing of the proverbial plate. Attendants then join hands and are led through a closing affirmation which varies from traditional Christian prayer to an Afrocentric appreciation of the Creator and our ancestors. Specific words of healing are offered after a particularly intense session. Afterward, the "congregation" breaks bread with potluck meals set up just outside the meeting space. Brothers then have an opportunity to relax, meet new faces and enjoy each other's energy.

It all started in November 1992 on a car ride back to Atlanta. Maurice Franklin, a well-known Atlanta activist now living in New York and a friend were returning from a Howard University homecoming weekend. During the trip, the two friends had attended a black gay men's rap session focusing on shade-consciousness within the race. On the return drive to Atlanta, they buzzed about the potential for similar organizing in their city. They hammered out the structure and logistics and Franklin rounded up other local activists like Archie Freeman, Kamau Ifoma and Bruce Wilkerson. "We had about nine people show up to that first meeting at my house," Franklin recalls. "The first topic was 'Does Your Mama Know.?' We were at different levels of comfort regarding our sexuality. We wanted a structure that supported honesty and free thought."

From its inception, Second Sunday had an informal style that promoted intimacy and spirituality. Monthly meetings were scheduled for the second Sunday, and rotated among members' homes. Potluck meals were established as a ritual. The spirits of the ancestors were invoked regularly. Word quickly spread throughout the community that something special was happening for black men - an entity created by and for brothers to provide safety for each other as same-sex attracted men. "It was time for black gay men to take care of their own," Franklin muses. "If we live in fear we cannot be strong. We wanted to foster new people to become leaders."

Solely by word of mouth, the group's popularity widened and its ranks expanded. Meeting formats became more varied, including panels, guest speakers, small group breakouts. Presentations were often very stylish. A session on black and white men relationships was held as a mock trial with legendary diva Duncan Teague as attorney for the defendant "Interracial Dating." A joint meeting with ZAMI, the black lesbian organization, was entitled "Everything You Always Wanted To Ask A Lesbian But Were Afraid You'd Get Beat Up!"

Meetings were still held in members' homes, with more than forty men cramming into living rooms, and standing and squatting on floors. Some of the old guard such as Franklin and Freeman had relocated and newer members were stepping up to the plate. A handful of them handled all the necessary tasks — mailing flyers, setting up potluck and facilitating meetings. A focus group meeting was held at Kalo's Coffeehouse to identify problems and devise solutions. Doug Jones, a writer currently residing in New York, was an active member during that period. "Second Sunday was a child then going through its terrible two's. It was a natural outgrowth of new people coming in, a lack of continuity between the new and the early members."

With over 120 members on its mailing list and an average attendance of 65 men per meeting, Second Sunday has grown tremendously. Its success may be at least partially attributed to its adherence to its original priorities and despite its expansion, there is still a level of intimacy. It still offers an environment that's safe, fun and supportive. The potluck is still a mainstay.

By-Laws were written and elections were held to usher in formal structure and accountability. The two Co-Chairmen are Ulester Douglas, a psychotherapist, and instructor with Men Stopping Violence and The Rainbow Project; and Craig Washington, an activist and African American Outreach

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

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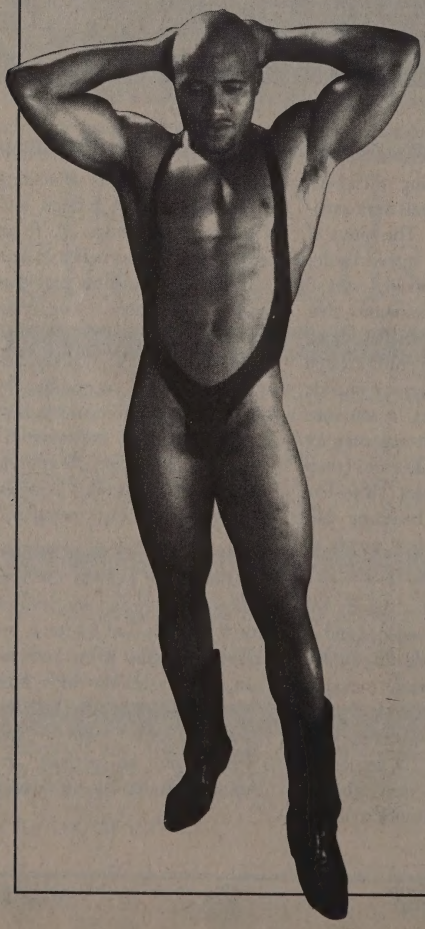

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SECOND SUNDAY,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Coordinator with AID Atlanta. Accountant Robert Simmons serves as the Treasurer and Kevin Madison, as Interim Secretary. A chain of several task committees, a steering committee and an executive committee performs the administrative duties.

With over 120 members on its mailing list and an average attendance of 65 men per meeting, Second Sunday has grown tremendously. It's success may be partially attributed to its adherence to its original priorities and despite its expansion, there is still a level of intimacy. It still offers an environment that is safe, fun and supportive. The potluck is still a mainstay. And there's no other space in town quite like it. Egypt Freeman explains, "[It's] something outside of the smoky bars and clubs where we look at each other in the dark. It's a way of meeting these people we see out and finding out who they are and what they're thinking." On a more personal note, Freeman adds, "I come to meet people and come out of my closet, not of sexuality, but my closet of personality. It makes it easier to talk to people." Co-Chairman Douglas adds , "Also, it is a place where we challenge the oppressive forces which nurture self-hate and distrust of each other. We build intimacy and a sense of community."

This year the group held several social functions to raise funds and promote more bonding outside of the meetings. The "Where The Boys Are - 1996 Picnic" was their first annual Labor Day fundraiser and drew favorable reviews from Atlantans and out-of-towners.

Second Sunday has made concerted efforts to address the AIDS epidemic in their community. They recently signed agreements with AIDS Education and Services for Minorities (AESM) and AID Atlanta's Umoja Project to host safer sex forums. An AIDS Walk team is being assembled and a panel discussion on Alternative AIDS Therapies is scheduled for November. The group also serves as a collaborator with an HIV-intervention program at Georgia State University targeting young black gay men.

As the organization undergoes growth in rank and activities, it strives to serve its main purpose - its raison d'etre. Some members have expressed concern that the focus could become lost. Hopefully, Second Sunday will continue to do what it does very well and the brothers will continue to attend. One member offered simply, "I just come here for the love, that's all."

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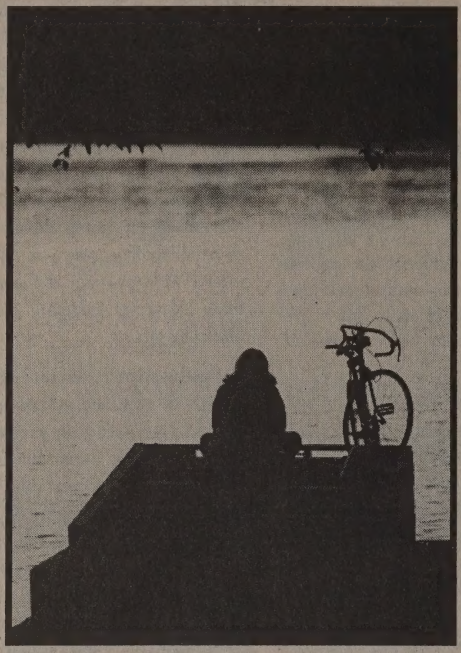

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The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

NBGLLF NEW D.C. Office

Washington, D.C.- One year after becoming a national organization the National Black gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum (NBGLLF) announced the opening of its new Washington, D.C. office on September 14,1996. The forum invited the community to visit the offices and meet staff and members of the board of directors at a half-day open house. The open house was followed by an evening reception and fund raiser.

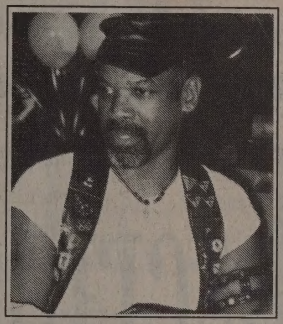
The guest speakers for the reception included Deval Patrick, U.S. Asst. Attorney General for Civil Rights, and Keith Boykin the Leadership Forum Executive Director who gave opening remarks. For more information about the new location, please call Mark Johnson @ (202)48-FORUM or (202)518-0388.

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta

BWMT/ Atlanta presents a two part series entitled "Breaking Down The Barriers-Why Are The Walls Still So High?" RAP Groups will be held on November 9, 1996. For more information, please call (404)892-BWMT(2968).

Mr. Southeast Drummer '95 leaves the Eagle

Atlanta-Rico Ware, manager of Atlanta's premiere leather bar, and the first and only black man to win a Mr. Southeast Drummer title, has announced his resignation from the Eagle. Ware has launched his own company entitled "Promethean Leather Productions, Inc." which will produce the 1997 Mr. & Ms. Georgia Olympus Leather Contest at Back-



Rico Ware

street on Sunday November 24th. The winners will compete in the finals for the 1997 International Mr. & Ms. Olympus Leather in February in New Orleans. For info call 404-622-7844.

Leathermen of Color Celebrate 1st Anniversary over Columbus Day Weekend

Chicago-ONYX, a club for leathermen of color, hosted their 1st Anniversary Weekend, The ONYX Blackout, on last month. A portion of the dance proceeds benefit the Leather Archives and Museum and Brother II Brother, a community outreach intervention project for African-American males. Cell Block Chicago hosted the reception where local sponsors were honored. Specific information can be obtained by calling the ONYX-line at (312)329-6141.

ZAMI Moves to New Location!!!

Atlanta- ZAMI, a support group for African-American Lesbians, will begin meeting in a larger space provided by the AIDS Survival Project, located at 828 West Peachtree Street Suite 206. Please note that the name is not on the building, only the address. The building is between 5th and Biltmore Streets.

Audre Lorde

Their new meeting times will be 4:00-6:00 pm. The door will be locked at 4:30 p.m. To gain entry please ring the buzzer. There is an elevator for those with mobility needs. The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays (not every other Sunday), and plans to award three $1,000 scholarships named in honor of lesbian, feminist, poet Audre Lorde to deserving black lesbian college students. Call (404)370-1392 for more info.

Tribute to Dr. Barbara King

Atlanta-This year marks the 25th anniversary of Dr. Barbara King as the founder-minister of Hillside Chapel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

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for colored girls who have considered suicide/ when the rainbow is enuf

L-R: Jen Harper, Bernardine Mitchell, Brenda Porter, Kathy Smith, Roz White, Tamara Madison-Shaw, and Olivia Dawson in Jomandi's "For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf." photo: Eric Johnson.

Jomandi Kicks Off Season With "For Colored Girls who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow is Enuf"

Written by Ntozanke Shange and directed by Andrea Frye, this unique and dramatic piece stars Bernadine Mitchell, Roz White and Kathy Smith, from the award-winning **"Bessie's Blues"**. Also appearing is Brenda Porter from the Shirlene Holme's play **"A Lady and a Woman"**, and several other exceptional talents assembled as the strongest female cast since Jomandi's **"Jar the Floor"**. **"For Colored Girls"** is the first production of Jomandi's 18th Anniversary ***"From Broadway to Jomandi"*** Season of Classics. Performances run through November 10,1996, at the 14th Street Playhouse.

For tickets, call the Ticketmaster Arts Hotline 817-8700. For groups, subscriptions and other information, call 876-6346. Jomandi offers special discounts for STUDENTS and SENIOR CITIZENS at the 14th Street Box Office. Call 733-4750 for showtime and ticket prices.

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ROCK THE VOTE

by Shirlene Holmes

I like the fact that Clinton was young, concerned about family and the disenfranchised. And really I dug Hillary, who was not going to be a First Lady who stayed at home baking cookies and writing books about her dog.

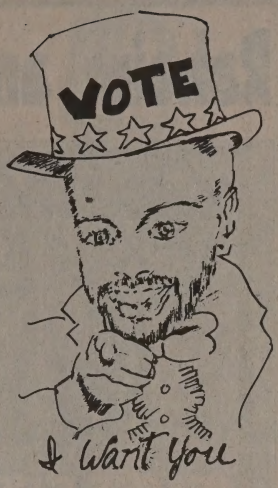
What I like about Clinton now is that he gave it a try these last 4 years. He did what he could. Let's face it, no one president can save America. She's too far gone. Her debts are too high. Her hands covered with so much blood. It's just a matter of time and she's going to fall. Anyone with a spiritual conscience knows that. There are too many signs. Even the birds are flying away from here. The way I look at it, if Egypt fell with all of her glory, America is only biding time.

The issue is, this country has got to stay afloat. I say, Clinton is the best person to do that. He knows what's going on, and he has not been the worst to govern this country. In other words he's been there and done that. If you vote for him, you pretty much know what you're getting.

One thing I do know is that we cannot elect someone who will turn back the clock. God forbid women lose the right to choose.....gays and lesbians are forced to retreat back to the closet....and African-Americans have to return to the back of the bus.

I am the last person to claim to be so perfectly political. I just know what time it is. It's time for change. Change of attitude, and change of action, and change of president. We can't fuss with the white folks or the straight folks or the religious folks, unless we get involved.

Knowledge is power, so we've got to be more informed, and more organized. We've got to start talking about November 4th and where we're at. We can't afford the apathy. We can't afford the procrastination nor the ignorance. The political process applies to us, whether we recognize it or not. Decisions are being made about our lives. What are we doing about it?



All we have to do is watch "Eyes on the Prize". Or think about Sojourner Truth and Martin Luther King, Jr. and them. There are too many named and unnamed to mention who fought for the vote and never got to cast it. We need to go to the polls out of respect for those who gave their lives. Excuses are no longer good enough. Take a look at your gross pay and then your net pay. Take a look at the homeless sleeping on the grass in the parks of the city. Take a look at the predictions for the next century.

Make November 4th a priority. Ask your lover if he or she votes. Make a date to go to the polls: put voting in the foreplay, honey. Don't sit where you are on the issue. Take responsibility; that's the absolute expression of gratitude and pride in your heritage.

As a family, we need to gather and pool our pennies. Alone we seem like nothing, but together we are many and mighty. You ever tried to pick up a bag of pennies? It's much too heavy to try to throw away. We are like that with our vote. When we cast our vote, we put our penny down on the chance that when the President gets ready to move (make a decision), he knows he's got alot of weight on him. He just can't pick us up and throw us around. He's got to do something, with us in mind.

In the days of revolution, the brothers and sisters used to say, "you're either *ON* the way or *IN* the way."

Don't just read this, then turn the page, and look at the ads.

Yes, I'm talking to you.

Make a commitment to being where it's at.

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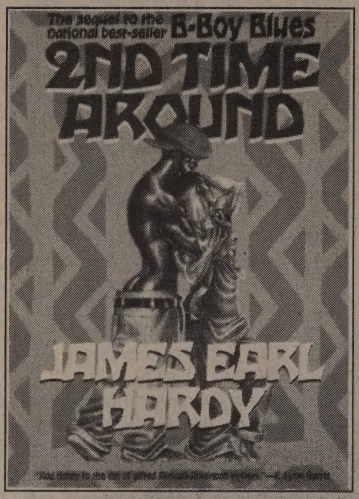
Raheim and Mitchell are back!



Yes, Raheim "Pooquie" Rivers and Mitchell "Little Bit" Crawford are back—and they've got a serious love thang goin' on, and IT'S ALL JOOD. But for Raheim, it's a trip that promises to be both phat and frightening. With love, mayhem, and family goin' on, it's no wonder Raheim doesn't go mad crazy!

a alyson books

James Early Hardy will be reading from and signing copies of his new book on November 9th at the following Atlanta stores.

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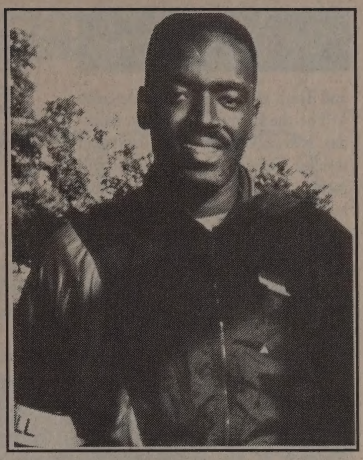
PROFILE OF A MAN

Name: . . . . Steve Lee Walker
Age: 28
Status: . . . . New committed relationship (Hip Hip Hurrah!!)
Hometown: . San Pedro Sula, Honduras, Central America (Now living in Houston, TX)
Career: . . . . Public health educator
Latest Book:. One More River to Cross, Black and Gay in America by Keith Boykin



The passage of DOMA and the defeat of ENDA come to me as a stinging wake-up call. Bisexuals, gay men, lesbians and transgender people of African descent must take a more visible role in defining ourselves and movement. We stand at the dawn of a new era, and must make certain we are part of the team of architects drafting plans of "the movement." We must address the homophobia that exits in our society and our ethnic communities with the same vigor that we combat the racism and sexism of America and of the "mainstream" gay community.

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The 411, continued

and Truth center. Dr. Maya Angelou will be the keynote speaker on Saturday November 9th where men and women from around the world will gather to honor the woman whose leadership, courage, love and vision

Dr. Maya Angelou

have made her one of the most influential women of all times. The Tribute to Dr. Barbara King will be held at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel at 6:00 p.m. in Atlanta.

"Out in Black" poster

Los Angeles-Ron Singleton Photography announces the release of a new poster titled "Out in Black" (OIB). The new poster, the first for the artist, will feature many photographs of African-American gays & lesbians taken at the many different events and activities which Ron has covered during the past three years for

Photographer Ron Singleton

publications such as SBC, Venus and others, as well as some of his personal work. Many of the photos will also be included in an upcoming photo book and an exhibit of the same name.

Lambda Center Grand Opening

Atlanta- Lambda Center announced it's grand Opening on Saturday October 19th. The Center is located at 823 West Peachtree St. The keynote speaker was Torie Osborn, author of "Coming Home To America/ A Roadmap to Gay & Lesbian Empowerment."

The Hoyt Fuller film Festival

Atlanta-On Friday, November 22nd,1996 at 7PM, at the Georgia Pacific Auditorium on 133 Peachtree Street, The Atlanta African Film Society's 12th Annual Hoyt Fuller Film Festival, will premiere the much anticipated, "WITCH CATCHER", an ITVS/CPB production by acclaimed local Producer/Writer/Director William Hudson. The Festival will also feature Afro-Cuban filmmaker, Gloria Rolando, introducing her latest film, "MY FOOTSTEPS in BARAGUA". The film merges family memories, traditional music and dance to tell the moving story of the English-speaking West Indian community in Cuba. Admission: $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members. For further information, please call(404) 818-6444.

Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative

The Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative, a group of concerned lesbians representing various organizations in the metro-Atlanta area, are developing a support group for lesbians with cancer and their partners. We believe that an emotionally safe environment is essential in order to give and receive support. In keeping with providing a safe environment we are offering the group at no cost at a local feminist bookstore. If you are interested in participating in the support group or joining the Atlanta Lesbian Cancer Initiative, please call (404) 651-2866, or write to us at: 1189 Euclid Avenue-Atlanta, Georgia 30307.

A Lady and A Woman

Atlanta-Dr. Shirlene Holmes, playwright and Professor of Communications at Georgia State University, read from her new work, Pride Cycle, at Charis Books earlier this month. The work consists of 7 plays in one and are short hilarious dramas about African-American gay and lesbian life. A packed house literally rolled in the isles as Holmes read a story about a lesbian couple discovering that their teenage daughter is also a lesbian. Her adored play 'A Lady and A Woman' has been published by Applause Books. Entitled Amazon Al Stars, Holmes' play is the only African-American piece in an anthology of lesbian lifestyle.

LGADDA elects New Officers, Makes Endorsements

Oakland-New officers of Lesbians and Gays of African Descent for Democratic Action (LGADDA) were elected. Ron Hypolite, an Oakland attorney and the Client Services Director of the AIDS Legal Referral Program, was elected chair for the 1996-97 terms. Hypolite is also the editor of Departure Point, an African-American monthly newsletter.

For further information please contact Gwenn Craig @(415)647-2441.

AALGA and NBLGF Co-Sponsor UJIMA Conference

Houston-The African-American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA) and the National Black Lesbian Gay Leadership Forum (NBLGLF) announced the UJIMA Conference in Houston November 15 through November 17 at the Sheraton Astrodome Hotel. Workshops will focus on homophobia, empowerment, coming out issues, HIV/AIDS, working with families, and working with the Black Church. A panel discussion will follow a screening of "All God's Children", co-produced by Dr. Sylvia Rhue and Dee Mosbacher.

Out Within

by: Dr. Shirlene Holmes

Boston Sisters enjoying National Coming Out Day.

October 11th was National Coming Out Day. I always have funny feelings about it. At this time, I think to myself, who can I come out to? Just who would be interested?

I believe that the most important folks in my life already know, and most often, they don't want to talk about it. It's all the other folks in my life that's the issue. Those old friends I grew up with back in my hometown. People I used to work with. Ex-boyfriends. Distant cousins. The psychic I visit who sees a man in your future. Yuch!

I don't advocate hiding. It's bad for the body. Gives you such inner stress, you find yourself in the arms of folks you normally wouldn't hold the door for in public. You've got to always be able to say I'm one of them and not flinch. No matter what.

Such courage comes with time.

I just hate that you get another label when you come out. The last thing I want to be called is queer. It doesn't even sound pretty. Queer ranks right up there with bitch and nigger. I know there is a big campaign by activists to rescue these derogatory names, but I still don't warm up to them.

I must admit I kind of like the power of being called a dyke or a bulldagger, sounds tough, and definitely, no nonsense. And lesbian is alright, but it seems like a Greek thang that the white girls chose to be called, and the rest of us just followed suit. I wonder what Egyptian women called sisters called themselves when they were lovers? They were probably so advanced, they didn't even need a name for it; it just was. Sometimes you just can't find the appropriate word for a thing. Gay and lesbian is the best of the names we have right now, so I concede. Call me that.

This coming out thing is an issue. Sometimes I just want to come out at the oddest times in the oddest places. Like at church, during testimony service. I just

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

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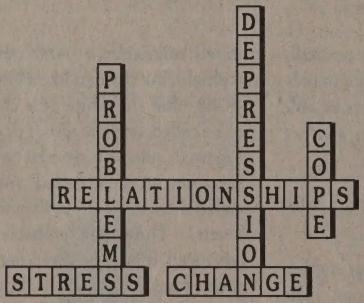

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OUT WITHIN,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

want to rise up and shout: "I'm a lesbian; praise the lord!", but I just know my mother would appear out of thin air to break my neck, as she did when I was a child. You just don't be but so honest in the Lord's house.

Sometimes I just want to come out at my annual visit to the GYN. In the middle of a pap smear, when he asks the dumb question, "what type of birth control are you using?" I just want to rise up and say, WOMEN!!!!! I'm a lesbian!" But I don't mention it until we're both in an upright position.

I've come to learn over time that coming out is a process. For some it is an over night sensation; for others it is a 10 to 20 year affair.

And of course, there are those who never come out. They are usually the dirty old so and so's, preying on the kindness of strangers. Or the suppressed, oppressed and depressed disenfranchised folks mumbling to themselves on park benches or church pews.

I have a friend named Karen who swears she never was coming out of the closet, because she was never in! I envy those born lesbians and gay men. Never knew anything else. Never even wanted to smell it. Just grew up same-sex attracted. All of us are not that fortunate; we discover ourselves a bit later in life.

I have a best friend in Boston, who put on her combat boots and kicked that closet door down when she came out. When we first met, she was a mild-mannered married heterosexual. She left Atlanta, and the next time I saw her she was Lesbian at Large, wearing rainbows and toting a thick little black book, saying to the girls, "you can take a number and wait". she told me she called every relative and friend and proudly proclaimed her new found sexuality, joined a support group for colored lesbians, and marched in every damn pride parade in her region. Not a lick of angst. Not a shutter or a tear. She was a born-again lesbian and glad about the whole thing! I could have kissed her. I wish it was that way for all of us.

I also have a friend buried in a closet on the west coast. Afraid to let anyone know he's gay except myself and strangers in the bars and alleys. He's a faithful servant of the church. He spends a lot of time praying that God nor the saints will ever find out about him. He had a wife once, just for appearances. She left him for a woman..... He's educated, handsome, and passionate about Jesus. And he's got less than 60 t-cells left in his body; I don't know how long he'll live.

I think National Coming Out Day is about telling yourself. Acknowledge you. It's not all about revealing yourself to others or marching in the pride parade. Or putting a rainbow sticker on your car or even reading your Venus magazine in public. It's about looking in that mirror and loving yourself. Coming out to you. Coming out within.

I think National Coming Out Day is about telling yourself. Acknowledge you. It's not all about revealing yourself to others or marching in the pride parade. Or putting a rainbow sticker on your car or even reading your Venus magazine in public. It's about looking in that mirror and loving yourself. Coming out to you. Coming out within.

Stop trying to be who others want you to be. You'll find if you claim your sexual identity people will dick-tate ('scuse me, but that's the real deal), how you're supposed to be. What clothes you should wear. Don't all gay males get their nails done? Shouldn't all lesbians have that androgynous look? Folks will tell you how you should walk and talk. What places you should frequent. You might find yourself weighed down with others' expectations and judgements. "You're not fierce enough, honey."

That's what they all say.

The real cause for celebration has nothing to do with telling others that you're in the life; it's affirming it within yourself, and being gay about it. (pun intended).

Go within and come out.

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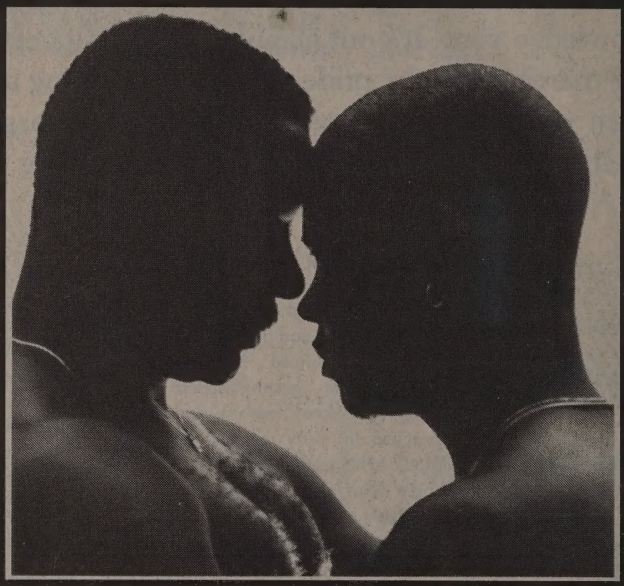

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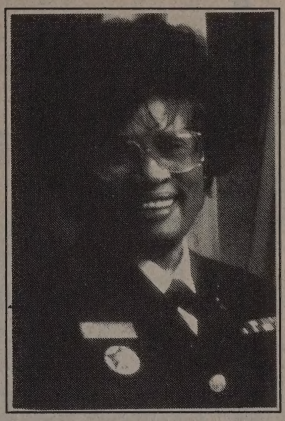
National Black Lesbian & Gay Leadership Forum Announces 10th Anniversary Conference

Los Angeles—The Tenth Anniversary of the National Black Lesbian and Gay Conference and Institutes will take place February 13-17,1997 at the Long Beach Hilton & Towers in Long Beach, California. This year's theme, "Black Lesbians and Gays: Celebrating Our Legacy," will focus on the recognition and acknowledgment of the powerful, influential, and critical contributions made by Black Lesbians and Gays.

Confirmed speakers at the NBLGC include former Surgeon General Dr. Jocelyn Elders, poet and activist June Jordan, and Harvard Professor Dr. Cornel West.

L to R: Vallerie Wagner, Ruth Waters, Phil Wilson, Stephan Oxendine, co-founders and co-chairs of the 10th Annual National Black Lesbian and Gay Leadership Forum.

The Conference is currently soliciting vendors, workshop presenters and volunteers for the five-day event. Vendors will have the opportunity to display their merchandise in a prime locale at the Conference. Workshop presenters are needed to provide information to participants on issues of relevance to the community. Volunteers are needed to provide support for the Conference structure.

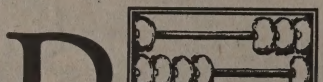


Dr. Jocelyn Elders is confirmed to address Black lesbians and gays in Long Beach, CA, February 1997.

Each year, the NBLGLF attracts nearly 1,000 national and international presenters and attendees. The Conference offers an ideal time for members, supporters and friends of the NBLGLF to reflect on issues, challenges and direction of the black lesbian and gay community.

The Forum will also sponsor several fund raising events around the country to raise money for the 1997 Conference Scholarship Fund. All revenue collected will go towards providing scholarships for PWA's and individuals with chronic illnesses.

Please contact the FORUM at (213)964-7820 for additional information.



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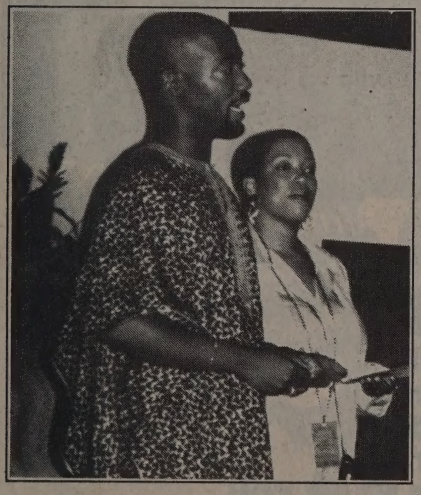
OUT & about

Joy Barnes reads a proclamation from the City of Atlanta celebrating Black Gay Pride '96 as Aida Rentos, and co-chairs Bruce Williams and Tara Summerville look on.



Craig Washington and Alishia Bristow served as Masters of Ceremony during In The Life's Kick Off Reception during Black Gay Pride '96.

Atlanta's TRIBECA Boutique sponsored Venus' fashion show during the annual Women's Ice Breaker.

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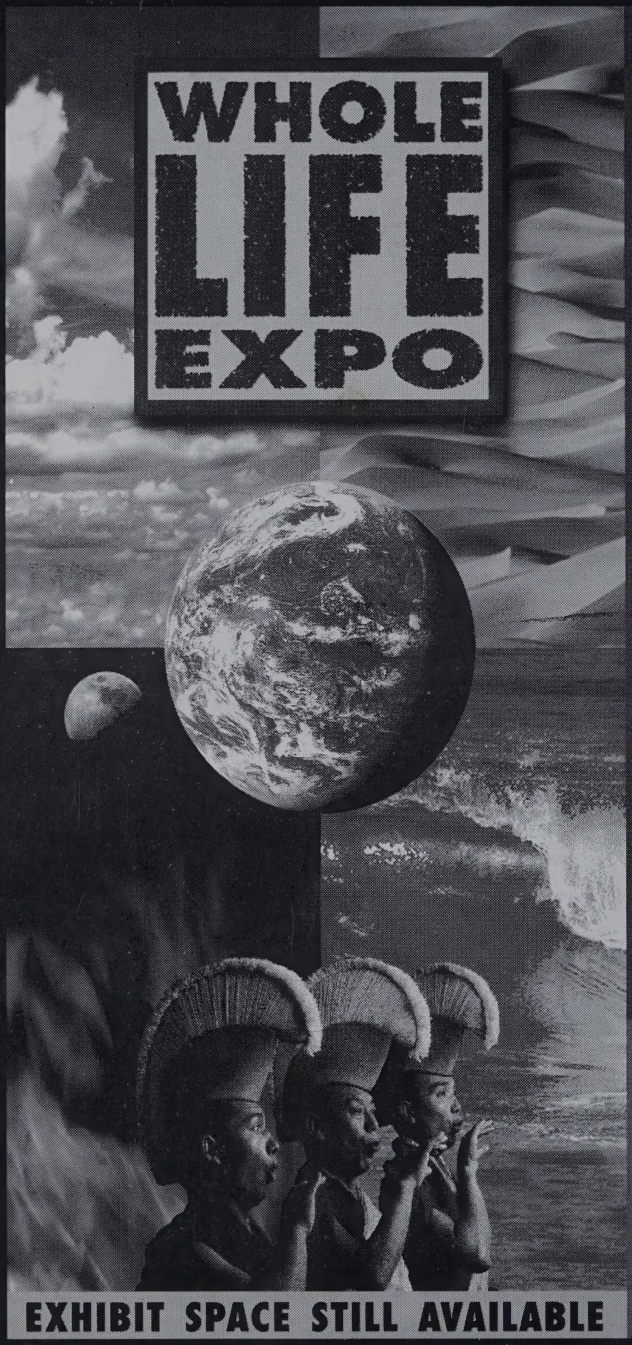

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Celestine Prophecy

Brian Weiss
Many Lives, Many Masters

Barbara Marciniak
Bringers of the Dawn

Dannion Brinkley
Saved by the Light

Shakti Gawain
Creative Visualizations

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a Lesbian's Sexual Harrassment Story

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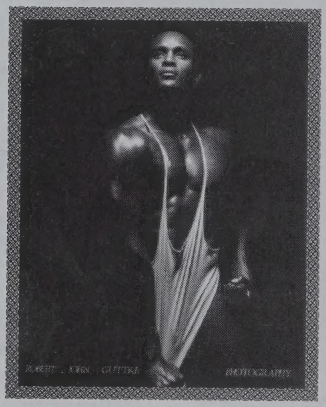

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Vallerie Wagner and Gregory May, BGLLF Co-Chairs

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FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

October 1995
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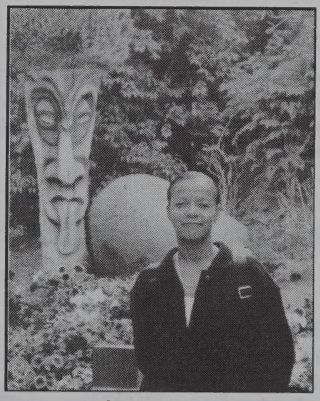
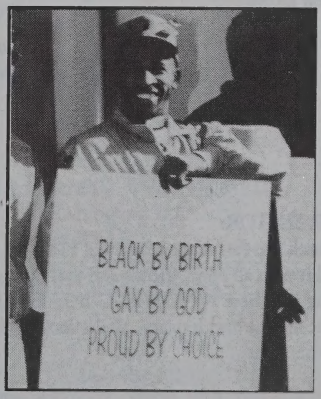
Climbing the wall in China.



Indecent Proposals



Crashing the Million Man March with our own 10% Club.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

Thanks for creating a voice in Atlanta. I look forward to reading your publication. However, I have one concern. I am a middle-aged person (44) and find it difficult to find articles, books etc. relating to persons in my age group. It would be interesting to read an articles periodically, focusing on older or mature persons. Think about it.

Once again, thank you.

DEAR EDITOR:

Horahee! Just a note to congratulate you on a professional, informative, down-to-earth publication. This is only a beginning!

Charles B. Tarver
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing first to commend you and your staff for printing such a fine and informative publication. "Venus" is definitely a newsworthy magazine, and I pray that it's distribution will be more widespread in the near future.

Linus Lynell
Dallas, TX

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for Venus Magazine! I love it!! I have shared it with all of my friends and they also enjoyed reading it. There is NOTHING here for African-American gays and lesbians. We're looking forward to the next one!

Waletta Scott
Las Vegas, NV

DEAR EDITOR,

You may be surprised to learn exactly how remarkably reknowned Venus Magazine is. Your "Where to Find Us" page doesn't do you justice.

Venus has transcended the orderly world of free society and miraculously been found inside the gay prison society.

You've proved to be an entertaining, intelligent and informative companion. Thank you for reducing the isolation of my imprisonment.

Vernon Beal
Jefferson City, MO

DEAR EDITOR:

I picked up Venus Magazine at the Visitor's Bureau at Underground. A nice lady handed it to me when I inquired about gay and lesbian Atlanta. Keep up the good work. We need you!

Viola
Brooklyn, NY

DEAR EDITOR,

Alright!, Alright, Alright!!!

I happened to stumble across a copy of your magazine at the recently held First Annual Out-Charlotte Festival. Enclosed is my subscription. I look forward to reading the entire magazine. And if there is any way I can help out please feel free to let me know! Great job! It does my heart good and I look forward to hearing from you!!

C. David Wingate
Asheville, NC

P.S.: You have the beginnings of something phenomenal—Hang in there!!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Yvonne "Evee" Smith Adams

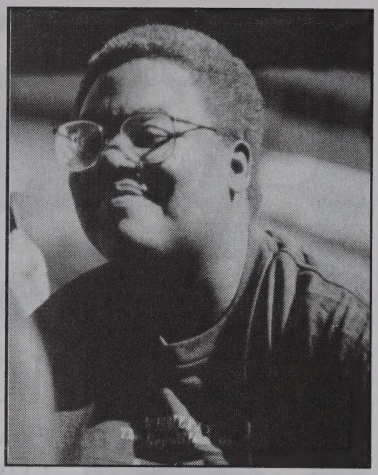
Age: 41

Status: . . . . . To Be Arranged

Career: . . . . . College Advisor/Instructor

Hometown: . . Washington, D.C.

Latest Book: . "Hunter" by Margaret Sloan



As an advisor at Oregan State University, Evee's motto is "I am who I am, I have the right to go wherever I want. I'm responsible for my own joy and happiness in life."

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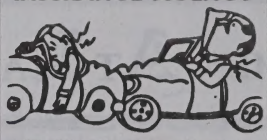

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Traveling to China: A Spiritual Journey

By Wanda Alston

Lately, I have been asked if I considered myself black first or a woman first. Some Black women may say that I am Black first. For me, I am a woman first because of the household I grew up in with eight males and five females. Growing up, my parents have never addressed me as a "black person." A number of references were made to my gender and the limitations that went with being a girl. I felt oppressed as a girl before I ever stepped outside my door into the world of sexism, racism classism, homophobia..

PHOTO COURTESY WANDA ALSTON

At the U.N. Conference on Women's Issues, Wanda Alston (l), Zachie Achmat from South Africa (c), and Valleria Wagner (r), NBGLLF co-chair.

I went to China wondering how I was going to find the niche that would let me know why I was there. I found that niche immediately as a feminist. I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did. I was a U.S.. citizen from North America. This is very different from being a citizen of South America or Central America. I was given a class distinction that I had not experienced in the U.S. As a result, I was faced with some issues that I was not ready to deal with.

The aspect of "class" that I was forced to deal with was not about being poor, middle class or rich. My class distinction was about freedom to express your ideas and thoughts and the opportunity to lift yourself from poverty and physical abuse.

This distinction was particularly clear when I spoke with and observed the women of China. In this communist country, women are treated with less respect than men. They also have very little say so when it comes to education and exchange of ideas and art. These distinctions were also true in many other countries as well.

During the conference, I had an excellent opportunity to network with women from a number of different fields. Patricia Ireland, President of NOW (National Organization for Women), and I co-led a delega-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

tion of thirty NOW members. The group was part of a larger U.S. delegation of 500 women and about 50 Chinese women as part of a U.S.-China Joint Conference on Women's issues in Beijing. Each organization had delegates who were invited to share their professional and organizational experiences. Many of the participants were from the fields of science, technology, medicine, sports and business.

The two day work session was very diverse and covered topics including: violence against women, achieving justice for women, and careers in engineering, etc.

One of the prevailing factors that all the women agreed upon was the fact that a glass ceiling does exist in China as well as the U.S. Women are only able to advance to a certain point on the employment ladder. Beyond that point, males hold the high paying prestigious jobs.

This was discussed in a workshop I attended concerning the women of China. Ninety-five percent of the top management positions in China are held by men with women holding only 5 of those positions. One reason for this is the mandatory retirement of women when they reach the age of 55. The women are then responsible for caring for the elderly.

The first week of my trip was full of cultural site seeing. I was able to visit the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven. These sites were an integral part of understanding the Chinese people and their culture.

We traveled throughout the city in 17 buses and ate our meals at the most exquisite restaurants in Beijing. The people of China had no problem feeding 500 people in one sitting. We would arrive at a restaurant, sit down and begin eating all at the same time. The average Chinese meal is approximately ten courses. Meals included a variety of foods including: vegetables, rice, fish, beef and chicken. The food was delicious. I must say, however, that by the time I returned to the U.S., I was glad not to eat Chinese food for a while.

There were a number of correlations between the Chinese women and the U.S. women. There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "women hold up half the sky." This statement was made during the cultural revolution by Mao. The statement refers to the need for the involvement of women if economic and political change is to take place. Women must be a part of the planning and decision making regarding country and governmental affairs at every level. In addition, if any governmental affairs at every level in addition, if any change is to take place in discrimination and human rights violations of women and children, we must unite with women whose culture and ideas may be like ours and find a common ground to bring about equality, development and peace.

I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did.

The theme of the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) Forum was "Equality, Development and Peace." My most memorable moment came at the opening ceremonies of the NGO Forum which took place on August 30, 1995 at the Olympic stadium. The event alone was spectacular. There was a feeling of unity and love from the crowd of 10,000 people from around the world. The people of China did a wonderful job of entertaining the global audience of the many women from 180 countries. They had participants from around China including men, women and children, old and very young.

The passing of the torch was a wonderful part of the opening ceremonies. Women from every country represented at the World Conference on Women passed the torch of equality, development and peace. This served not only to open the ceremony but to symbolize the uniting to discuss all issues of the past decade and into the next millennium. During the passing of the torch, everyone sang "Keep on Moving Forward." This was a very emotional scene which brought many to tears. The ceremony left me with a sense of joy and hope for the world.

The next day, the NGO began outside of Northeast Beijing in Huairou County.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Approximately 30,000 people from 180 countries participated. The first day, it rained and the global tent was filled with women trying to get program books, information and ponchos to help them stay dry. The small group of three women that I traveled with headed to the makeshift McDonald's for lunch. Yes, they did have a McDonald's. Some groups actually protested the presence of the fast food chain.

I wanted to participate in the NGO forum because of the lack of discussion of lesbian issues that had not been brought into the mainstream of the Platform of Action. The Platform included those actions that governments should take to eliminate poverty, violence against women, reproductive rights, health and many other issues. What was not included in the Platform of Action was sexual orientation. Sexuality, as it related to lesbianism and discrimination, was kept to a minimum. Representatives from South Africa were the most outspoken regarding this issue. The country has sexual orientation in their national constitution.

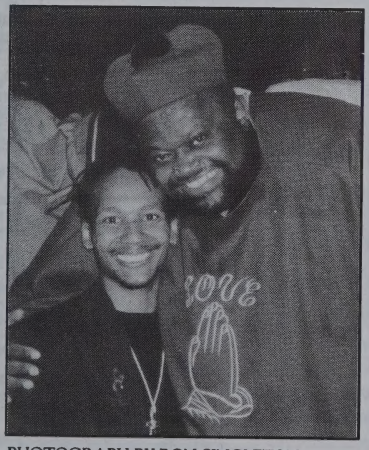
The final most remarkable experience I had going to China was the fact that all my life, I knew that people of color were the largest group in the world. That fact became very clear when I went to the NGO forum. I noticed that the majority of the women looked like me. This gave me some hope as I aspire to empower my sisters in the U.S.

I learned a great deal about myself during my travel to China. I met a woman who saved for five years to attend the conference. She sold straw baskets that she made. Here I thought that working the last few months to secure my way was a feat.

My journey was a spiritual one. It began months, years and decades before I consciously realized that I would be traveling to China. I have always wanted to travel to China. I feel spiritually connected to China, as I do Africa. This journey proved to be the beginning of many trips I will take outside the U.S. I use such journeys to discover and understand my blackness, lesbianism and my feminism. During my travels, I am able to explore want it is like to struggle in a movement where black women are still politically and economically invisible.

Wanda Alston is an activist from the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and N.O.W.

Where do you worship & why?



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Tony Daniels with Unity Founder, Bishop Carl Bean.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church is where I worship. This church is the one place that I've found that welcomes me as I am; a Black Gay Man, activist, writer, performer, living with AIDS. We embrace people from all walks of life, regardless of sexual orientation, race, sex, creed, or gender. The church's motto is "God is Love and Love is for Everyone." We make that clear every Sunday. I am an officer of the church (Deacon in Training), this affords me a lot of contact with the congregation. I know first hand the good we are doing in the name of the Lord God who is in each and everyone of us. The emphasis is placed on spirituality as opposed to the literal interpretation of written scriptures.

Tony Daniels, 1995

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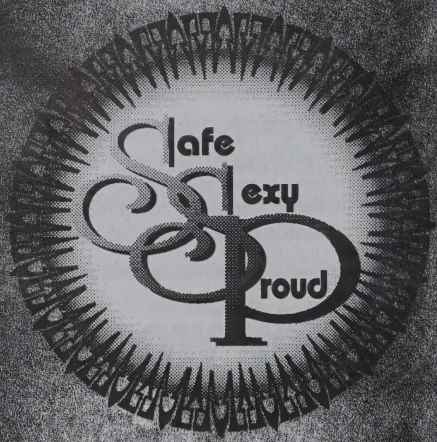

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Project Open Hand: Meals for Life

Project Open Hand is a non-profit organization which provides two freshly prepared meals a day, seven days a week to people who are living with AIDS in Atlanta. There is no charge to the recipients for the meals. Project Open Hand currently delivers to around 500 clients (1000 meals) per day. Approximately fifty new clients are added each month.

Project Open Hand works with a nutritionist to plan appropriate diets for people living with AIDS and HIV-related illnesses. The Project attempts to meet the varied needs of all of its clients by serving, in addition to regular meals, vegetarian, bland, no dairy, no salt, no pork, no red meat, no fish, soft meals, diabetic, and liquid meals.

Nutrition is one of the most important aspects of health care for a person with AIDS. The progression of HIV infection can be accelerated or intensified by nutritional deficiencies. It is imperative that people with AIDS have proper nutrition in order to try to maintain a stronger immune system. A large number of these people have neither the strength nor the energy to shop for ingredients or to prepare the meals. Frequently, people are devastated financially by the disease, and they do not have the resources to obtain nutritious food.

Project Open Hand pioneered a system of delivering meals cold, at close to freezing temperatures. Many meal delivery services deliver meals hot, requiring the food to be kept in warmers for long periods. Keeping the food warm can increase the risk of bacterial growth—an extreme hazard for immune-suppressed individuals. The Project serves meals in special packaging so that clients may use microwaves to heat the meals. Project Open Hand provides donated microwaves to clients who cannot obtain their own.

Project Open Hand began in 1988 with only fourteen clients, operating out of the kitchen of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. The Project has now served around two million meals. Project Open Hand relies heavily on volunteers for all aspects of its operation. Volunteers prepare, pack, and deliver meals to clients, work in the office, and assist in fundraisers and other community events.

In 1991, Project Open Hand moved to its current operating site at the old Bass High School in Little Five Points. The Project shares the kitchen there with the staff of Mary Lin Elementary School, which is using the building until renovations are completed on their own building. Project Open Hand is actively negotiating for a new facility for its operations.

Project Open Hand's annual $2.5 million operating expenses are funded through grants, private donations, fundraising events, and corporate giving.

Atlanta is a city which traditionally reaches out to its citizens who are in need and embraces their diversity. Project Open Hand continues to rediscover the "heart" of Atlanta and its people in the outpouring of help from its volunteers and supporters.

Project Open Hand is in need of volunteers in all areas of its operations, day and evening. Anyone interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities may call (404) 525-4620.

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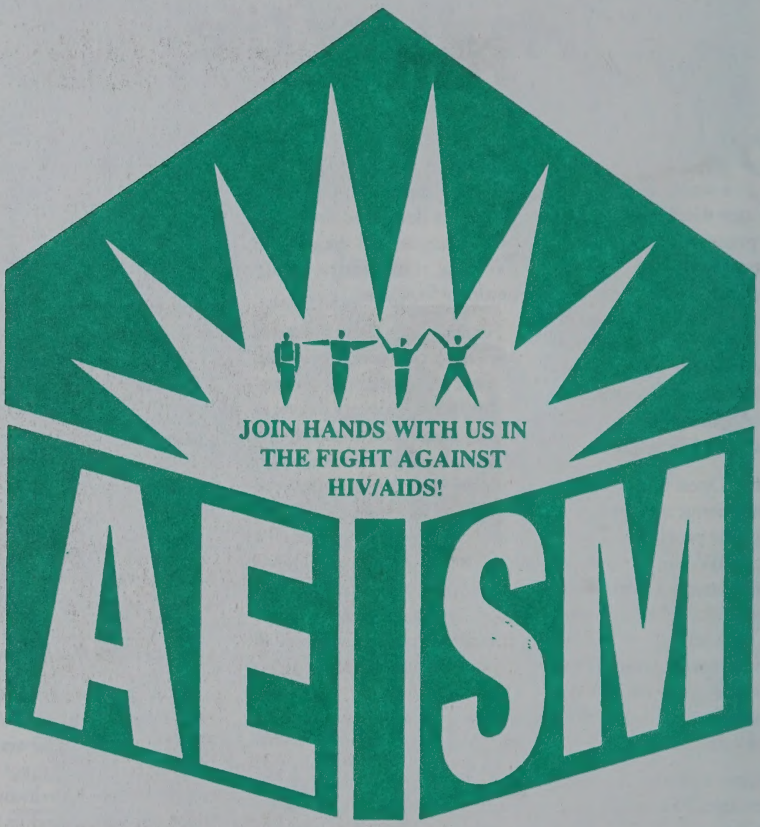
In Georgia there were over 6,000 reported cases of AIDS in the African-American Community, 67% of which are Homosexual/Bi-Sexual Men.



Our primary focus is black, gay men. We provide support through housing assistance, bar/club outreach, support groups, and financial assistance.

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Black Nations/Queer Nations?
MIX 95: Film/Video Festival

MIX 95: Ninth New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival—the largest avant garde film festival in the world and oldest queer festival in New York City—is bringing more than 200 queer experimental films, videos, and cybermedia from around the world to three venues in New York.

The festival will feature the long-awaited feature film debut by Thomas Allen Harris, "Vintage * Families of Value," an experimental documentary about black gay siblings. The Festival will close with the World Premiere of "Black Nations/ Queer Nations?" an experimental documentary directed by Shari Frilot about the historic conference by the same name which addressed lesbian and gay sexualities in the African Diaspora. MIX 95 will also feature "Jungli Boogie," a queer and South Asian groovin' production.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LYLE ASTON HARRIS

Isaac Julien and Kabena Mercer at "Black Nations/Queer Nations?"

Other festival highlights include CYBERTOPIA: Mapping Queer Spaces, an installation of interactive media works and queer digital media.

Free Speech TV (Nov. 4-17) four hours of the best of MIX 95 in a cable access program which will be broadcast daily in more than 50 cities across America, and and MIX BRASIL: 3rd Festival das Manifestacoes da Sexualidade, the only traveling lesbian and gay festival in South America. With the support of MTV Brasil, the Banco Nacional in Sao Paulo and the Sao Paulo state.

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Indecent Proposal

A Twist on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

By Rosalind Christine Lloyd

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been a popular topic in the media because it plays almost like a soap opera in that it reeks of scandal and controversy. It is an important topic as current events uniquely chronicles the ever-slowly changing role of women in the workplace. One only has to examine the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings and Senator Packwood case as points of reference to this fact. However, sexual harassment of and in the Gay and Lesbian community is a subject that lies deep in the heart of America's crowded closet. As our ranks become more visible, it was only a matter of time vefore we began to witness an increase in negative sociological issues that plague the heterosexual community beginning to infiltrate the homosexual community. For example, racism and sexism are alive and well in the Gay and Lesbian community, even in these so-called progressive "Gay Nineties."

We have been affected by sexual harassment, by and large, by

Author Rosalind Christine Lloyd

individuals that somehow consider themselves members of the heterosexual community. I know this to be true on a personal note as I have experienced this form of harassment first-hand. My twelve lesbian years did not prepare me for what I encountered and the experience managed to leave a lasting impression with serious scars that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

It was a complex situation crossing the lines of gender, sexual and racial politics all at once. For several years I worked for a prominent and very successful organization where I was "out" on the job. Although I didn't wear my sexual identity on my sleeve, my orientation was a well-known fact among my colleagues and I was accepted as a lesbian without issue.

When a highly qualified, well-connected African-American woman came to head our office as Director, I was empowered to know that the organization had the decency, initiative, and foresight to promote a sister as a Director to the Board of Trustees where women and African Americans were typically rare. It was a progressive step for the administration. Denise was Ivy league educated, came from a near wealthy family, she married into a wealthy, near prestigious family, boasted an impressive background, spoke French like only a dignified French woman could and had the chic-est fashion sense known to woman-kind. This sister was eager for any challenge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Denise and I developed an excellent working relationship as Director and assistant, mentor and protégé, and friends. Our association was driven by pride and mutual respect. To be on her team motivated me—it was my number one objective to ensure that our office produce high quality product and to reinforce the company's commitment to hiring talented African-Americans, Women and Gays and Lesbians into higher positions of authority. I would no longer allow the infamous glass ceiling to influence my desire to elevate. She inspired me to further my education, to reach higher than I thought possible, constantly reminding me of how bright and talented I am. With her support and encouragement, I became an important player in the scheme of things as they pertained to our office. My involvement in critical projects, presentations, and my participation in international conferences will always remain as important experiences I will never forget; Denise made it possible.

At first, I considered her overt interest in me as mere curiosity, which we all know will happen at times when certain heterosexual women learn that certain women are lesbians. Suddenly the wind shifts, the tides change, things just aren't the same anymore. You either become the receptacle of all her feminine desire or you become the gay representative of information on all things remotely related to Gay and Lesbian issues. This is not the most desirable position to be in.

It started out with the endless compliments and verbal adorations. Expensive dinners at pricey, upscale restaurants were common, where we ate quite well and the company paid for every bit of it. Gifts of foreign chocolates, antique jewelry of questionable value, French perfume, random pieces of designer clothing, unlimited use of her credit card for no apparent reason other that the fact that she was purely being nice to me. All of this resulted into a dangerous, unrequited obsession. An objective observer would initially view our tightness as a mentor-protégé relationship. However, if one were to take a closer look and peel off the layers of ambiguity and professional protocol, one could easily see a smoldering yet subtley restrained innuendo.

The innuendo soon escalated to advances; Denise finding excuses to touch my face, reasons to run her fingers along my hair, giving me unsolicited back rubs while telling me how beautiful she thinks I am. The "come with me to the ladies room," conversations about her husband and/or my lover were curious. The business trip to the Far East where she convinced me that it was safer we share a room with double beds, only to discover once we arrived that a king-sized bed was to be our shared sleeping accommodations!

I was in denial over what was happening. My lover at the time, insisted that something was going on and that I was deliberately overlooking it. I believed that my lover was simply being overprotective and possessive, a textbook case of co-dependency. Obviously at great risk, our relationship suffered irreparable damage from the ordeal.

One evening, Denise and I worked in the office until about 11:00 PM. We ordered dinner in and labored until we were brain-fatigued. She asked me if she could stay the night at my place; her apartment in the city was being occupied by friends of her family and she didn't feel like making the long trek upstate to her other home. I was fine with this, although I couldn't understand why a woman with two homes would want to sleep in my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

cramped studio apartment in one of the city's marginal neighborhoods. But, we were involved in an important project and I lived close to the office. It was terribly convenient.

After my shower, she was already in my bed. As I stood nearby setting the alarm clock, she asked me how could I wear such a tight t-shirt to bed. It was simply a sleeveless tee, typical sleep wear. Ignoring the comment, I climbed into bed next to her and lay silent for a few moments. After about ten minutes of silence, she asked me,

"When are we going to do it?"

It was so matter of fact, almost like it had been on the tip of her tongue all night.

I asked her to repeat what she had said because I was caught completely off guard, shocked and unprepared.

She said it again, "You heard me, when are we going to do it?"

I responded, "What about my lover and your husband?"

Denise whispered it harshly, "They don't have to know."

"But aren't you my boss and I'm your employee?" I had to confirm this fact with her.

"So? No one has to know, except you and me."

The reality shattered me. To say I was devastated would be a gross understatement simply because of what she initially represented to me. There it was, in my face, in my bed. I turned my back on her. The tension in that room was unbearable.

Everything changed. She was a woman not accustomed to the word "no" and her anger and feelings of rejection would reverberate throughout the duration of our acquaintance.

There was a drastic decrease in our close interaction. Although we tried to maintain a civility toward each other, now there was a great deal of stress between us.

On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent.... There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

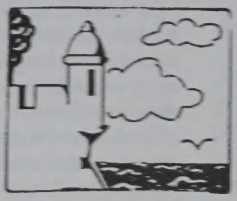
On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

Confused, disappointed, slightly flattered, I was feeling so many different conflicting things, but ultimately I felt manipulated and deceived.

She was a different person. My participation in conferences and projects were reduced. My requests for time off were frequently denied. My performance review was postponed indefinitely and she made it clear that a pay raise was not in my future. My work was being closely monitored and scrutinized to the point where we would have loud arguments in the office, even in front of co-workers. On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women only validated my denial and ignorance to the truth. Finally after one bitter disagreement I decided it was impossible for she and I to peacefully coexist together. I resigned from the best job I ever had.

For me, issues of empowerment among and for the African-American, Women, and Gay & Lesbian communities are essentially important being that I am a critical part of each of these groups. Within these groups, the African-American lesbian is at the bottom of each list, the least important, the most discriminated against and largely the most ignored. Due to this bitter piece of reality, I approach everyday life with these three common denominators in mind, and for these reasons I could not consciously persecute the already persecuted. The wide range of repercussions would be too deep. Although this harassment experience exploited everything that I am and represent, I had to take it to another level, of how the closet (someone else's) still destroyed my career and an important part of my life.

¡Somos únicos, visítenos y compruébenlo!



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Litany for Survival—
The Life &Work of Audre Lorde

Michelle Parkerson, filmmaker, on her involvement in this ground breaking work.

Producer/Director of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*, Ada Gay-Griffin first met Lorde in 1978 while studying black feminist literature and theory at Hampshire College. Griffin has helped introduce the work of outstanding filmmakers of color to audiences in the U.S. Griffin has also spoken and written on media literacy and empowerment. *A Litany for Survival* is her first film, completed after 10 years of struggle to release this first film to link black, gay and women's rights.

Griffin invited Director Michelle Parkerson, a writer and independent filmmaker from Washington, D.C. to work on *Litany* eight years ago. She has served on the faculties of Temple University, the University of Delaware, Howard University and Northwestern University. In 1992, she received a Rockefeller Foundation Film/Video Fellowship. As a member of the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women (8th Cycle), she wrote and directed "Odds and Ends," a black amazon science fiction story.

A Litany for Survival is an epic portrait of the eloquent, award-winning black lesbian poet, whose writing articulated some of the most important social and political visions of this century. Lorde, a controversial and celebrated African-American writer, cultural theorist and activist, embodied the connections among three dynamic social movements: the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the struggle for lesbian and gay rights. From Lorde's childhood in New York City's Harlem to her vibrant poetry and prose, from her battle against breast cancer to her forceful workshops and speeches, this powerful film explores her remarkable life.

Emory University's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life and ZAMI (Atlanta's group for African-American lesbians), in conjunction with the Southeastern Arts, Media, and Education Project will present the Atlanta premiere of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lord* November 18 at 4 and 8 PM in Harland Cinema (located in the Dobbs University Center on Emory's Campus). Griffin and Parkerson will host a discussion/question and answer session following the viewing. This event is open to the public. Students and seniors will be

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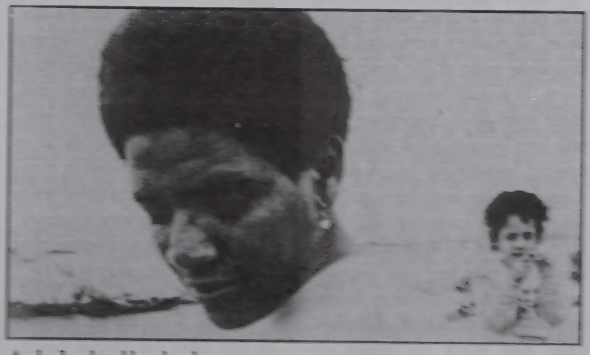


Audre Lord and her daughter.

admitted for $5, others for $10, payable at the door only.

Venus magazine profiled Parkerson to solicit her views on a myriad of concerns as a film executive, from challenges as a black gay woman to the impact of Lorde's works on her endeavors.

Venus Magazine: How did the vision for the film take place, and how did you go about facilitating that vision?

Michelle Parkerson: Basically my role in the project was to facilitate Ada's (Gay-Griffin, producer/director of the film) vision.

What this meant was the project was a collaborative effort on behalf of Ada, Audre Lorde, and myself. Audre was heavily involved in commenting on the footage, and the people we were to interview, giving us information for contacts and biography, as well as people to discuss and critique her work. It was firstly Ada's work and I was there, more or less, as a facilitator. Simply making sure the work makes it to the screen; I was the generator of the vision.

We wanted to present a film with Black Lesbians as the primary group or focus, to act as a document of Audre's present, not her past. Not a memorial. It would have been much easier to do something more celebratory that did not address some of the issues of Audre's works and life, including some of the contradictions. It would have not taken eight years to do something that was simply praising her work. We wanted something much more complex than that, because her work was so complex, and the film needed to represent the challenge that her work put out in the community-at-large. It was important to us that the film further her work in terms of

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Michelle Parkerson, Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

awareness, as well as involve people in work with women with cancer, being a survivor of cancer, and how one does that. We needed to also look at Audre's role in the international movement of people of color, and how we can all be a part of that. We were concerned with much more than making a film that was entertaining on a cinematic level. This film had work to do, to act as a catalyst to motivate people to do the necessary work wherever they find themselves.

We also had an eye towards a group of people who may not know, or even care, who Audre Lorde is, or what her work reflects. We also had the task of drawing them in and keeping them interested, and import Audre's work internationally. Import in terms of the Gay and Lesbian community, import as far as feminism is concerned, import as far as feminist literature is concerned, and as far as American literature is concerned. There were a lot of levels that we were working to satisfy, to come up with a structure that would reach out, address, inform and touch people.

Venus: What central message do you have for young, black, gay/lesbian filmmakers attempting to mobilize their community?

Parkerson: The hope is that there exists now generations of Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers who are out and have been impacted by the works of those who have paved the way; Marlon Riggs, Isaac Julien, Slyvia Rue, Joycelyn Taylor, Cheryl Dunae, Brent Hill, John Suggs, and Jamika Aljalan just to name a few. There are also their film and video works that one can study and see how to take an approach towards media and their sexuality as well as their race. In the mid 80's there arose a very visible group of sisters who were out with the material they were producing, letting the fact that they were Black Lesbians inform and shape the work as well. It was not peripheral to the material, it was not just about them.

For black people to have access to the media, still remains rare for Black people, in terms of controlling and shaping the images and utilizing the technology, it remains even rarer for Black women and especially Black Lesbian women. Black Gay and Lesbian film and video makers are showing the reality of how we love and struggle, have tensions, and make great achievements and how the translation comes across on the screen for brothers and sisters. It is very important that Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers are making Black Gay and Lesbian films.

Venus: In your opinion, why have our society's mature black lesbians and gay men chosen to remain invisible when they are needed as positive role models?

Parkerson: I think its where you are . It is a possibility that it's geographic. In Washington

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

(D.C.) the Black Gay and Lesbian presence here has certainly been very viable and visible in city and municipal politics. We don't sit still for discrimination in this city. We have a level of protection because of that visibility; housing discrimination, employment discrimination, and social injustice get front page coverage, because we speak up and out against it.

It is phenomenal what is happening in the south and Atlanta. In the city you have the anonymity or the numbers of people to join in the community, and that is not the case in rural areas. The larger cities have larger gay and lesbian communities; New York, San Francisco, Chicago, L.A., etc., as well as larger Black Gay and Lesbian communities. I think there is a certain conservatism that is pervasive the further south you get, almost as if the underlying consciousness is "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." I say that coming from a small southern town myself (Washington D.C.). We happen to have the focus of the nation in the sense of the world's attention here because of the government. Outside of the federal city, it is a small southern town, but there is a level of cosmopolitanism, and bodasciousness, a lack of not caring, which is a southern thing, about what people think and making it anyway. A large piece of southerner's care and comfort level in the community seems to be based upon other people's perception of us. Atlanta is coming, but there still exists this conservative atmosphere, and I'm wondering who that's for. Here (D.C.) and in Baltimore, and its a small southern town too, people have let it go. Baltimore may not be as cosmopolitan but it is progressive. That same vibration is present in Atlanta and growing. It happens whenever we acknowledge each other, when we start doing thing outside of the bars. Doing things that are empowering. Forming consciousness raising groups, things like Lesbians over 30-something, social and political action groups. Those kinds of things further our presence and empower each one of us to look into each other eyes. We can then look at things differently and say "Yeah, this is O.K.," "She's living fine, I'm doing O.K.," "How can I pass this on." These acts are very affirming. Venus Magazine is a part of that, it's a part of the affirmation and the rush towards progression and visibility. Thank god! you are down here.

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Ada Gay Griffin, Producer/ Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

The Lady in the Jewel Box—a film produced in 1987 was about the only woman to perform with the world famous Jewel Box Review, which was a troupe of female impersonators. The film was made for more reasons than the obvious. We wanted to preserve the history of the Jewel Box Theatre. It toured the Black theatre circuit and was the first integrated female impersonation show in the 50's and 60's. The show played across the country, to all sexual orientations, to black audiences that looked forward to seeing the show every year. The show had so much talent, there was no lip synching, they performed live, they had fabulous costumes, and the entertainers were beautiful. Their repertoire include the divas of the era; Dinah Washington, Lena Horne, and Billie Holiday, and they sang and danced to no end.

Mabel Hampton is another example of an old-school Black out Lesbian whose work was documented in the lesbian herstory archives. She has often been honored at national conferences by Black Gays and Lesbians.

There is a history of elders in our community that have struggled as we still struggle today. They dealt with tremendous pressures and invisibility. These examples tend to put into perspective your own personal ideas of how you're going to define your role as an African American and as Gay or Lesbian. It makes you that much more in tune to the realities of what you can and cannot do, and when it is appropriate to break barriers, and how one does that and survives. It brings it all together. It is important that we document the lives of our elders, its not all about the 20-something generation and what's happening now. There are people we need to look back on and that has always fortified us. Particularly as African people. When we look back at the legacy of people, and it will certainly fortify us as lesbians and gay people. When we can look at our own race and know James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Mabel Hampton, and Bayard Rustin were great black gay Americans.

About Audre Lorde

February 18, 1934–November 17, 1992

Audre Lorde is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights. Her writing has been translated in seven foreign languages.

Born the youngest of three daughters and raised in a West Indian household in Harlem, Audre Lorde began reading and reciting poetry at a very young age. She often used poetry to communicate with others. When she could no longer find poems to express her feelings, she began writing her own poetry. Her first published poem appeared in *Seventeen* magazine while she was a student at Hunter High School. Audre Lorde later attended Hunter College in New York City where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1959. She regularly attended and read with the Harlem Writer's Guild, and cited Langston Hughes and John Henrick Clarke as early mentors. She received a masters degree in Library Science from Columbia University in 1961 and worked as a librarian at Mount Vernon Public Library until 1963. She was head librarian at Town School Library in New York City from 1966 to 1968.

In 1968, Audre Lorde became poet in residence at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and published her first volume of poetry, *The First Cities*. Lorde's third volume of poetry, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, published by Broadside Press (Detroit) in 1973, was nominated for a National Book Award. *Coal*, published in 1976 by W.W. Norton and Company, was the first of Lorde's books to be released by a major publisher. A compilation of her first two books, it brought her work to a broader readership. W.W. Norton published five of her six subsequent volumes of poetry, collections which chart the development of her complex poetic and personal vision.

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978, Lorde's writings about her illness were published in *The Cancer Journals* which won the American Library Association Gay Caucus Book of the Year Award for 1981. Other prose included a biographical novel, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1982), and *A Burst of Light* (1986) in which Lorde, again diagnosed with cancer, returned to prose to help heal herself and inspire others. Audre Lorde's final volume of poetry, *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Disease* (1993) was published posthumously.

Audre Lorde worked intensively with women of color in many different countries, was a founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, a founding mother of Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa, and addressed two national marches: the 1983 20th Anniversary Commemorative March on Washington for Justice, Peace and Equality; and the First National March for Lesbian and Gay Liberation in 1979, also in Washington, D.C.

Audre Lorde was awarded the Walt Whitman Citation for Merit for poets and was named state poet of New York for 1991–1993. And she received honorary doctorate degrees from Oberlin College (1989) and Haverford College (1990). She retired to the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1987, continuing to work until her death in 1992.

Essex Charles Hemphill

April 16, 1957–November 4, 1995

Essex Charles Hemphill, poet, editor, was born in Chicago on April 16, 1957. He was raised in Washington, D.C. and as a youngster began perfecting the art of writing prolific, often controversial poetry about his life as a Black, gay man in America.

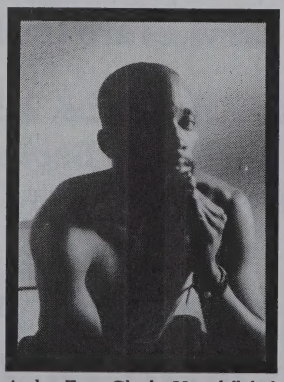
He founded **Nethula Journal of Contemporary Literature** in 1978. He ran the magazine several years before becoming more and more active as a performer. In 1983 he formed **Cinque**, a trio of performance artists.

Essex received Fellowship in Literature from the D.C. Commission for the Arts (1982, 1983, and 1988). He is the recipient of a 1985 Fellowship in Literature (Poetry) from the national Endowment of the Arts. And co-recipient of a 1986 and 1987 Painted Bride Arts Center New Works Residency.

His work has been published in **Black Scholar, Essence Magazine, Callaloo, Painted Bride Quarterly, Gargoyle, Outweek, Blackheart, Obsidian, New York Native, James White Review, Hometowns, I Hear A Symphony** and, still, several other North American publications.

Selections of his poetry are anthologized in **Artists Against Apartheid, The Poet Upstairs, In the Life, New Men, New Minds and Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men**, which he also edited, earning him a Lambda Award.

His work in print includes three self-published chapbooks, **Diamonds was in the Kitty** (1982), **Plums** (1983), **Earth Life** (1985), and a book-length collection, **Conditions** (1986).



Author Essex Charles Hemphill died Nov. 4, 1995.

Mr. Hemphill's work is featured in the films **Lookin' for Langston, Tongues Untied** and **Black Is, Black Ain't** (director Marlon Riggs' last film..)

In 1992, his first book of poetry, **Ceremonies**, was published, earning him the National Library Association's New Authors in Poetry Award.

In 1993, he worked in Santa Monica, California, with the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, Visiting Scholars Program. 1994 saw hime in Philadelphia, fulfilling the requirements of his Pugh Fellowship Award. It was in Philadelphia where he died of complications associated with AIDS on November 4, 1995. Mr. Hemphill will be funeralized and buried in Washington, D.C.

He is survived by his mother, Mantalene Clark Hemphill, three sisters and one brother, all younger. There are close friends and scores of admirers who will miss the dynamic element he brought to everyone's life through his words.

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In The Spirit; In The Life!

There is a Balm—
The Black Church Leadership Conference

By Craig Washington

The Second Annual Black Church National Education and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS was held on May 22-24, 1995, at the Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. Religious leaders, scholars and community workers from all over the country gathered to pray, plan and implement outreach and ministry efforts. The Conference was produced by The Balm in Gilead, Inc., a secular organization which provides education and technical support for African-American religious institutions engaged in HIV/AIDS education, services and advocacy. Founder Pernessa Seele enjoined the support of the nation's leading black spiritual dignitaries to ensure full participation. Within the context of this epidemic, the Black church must resume its historical role and relevance to the community that needs it now more than ever. This Conference was a groundbreaking step toward this process of reclamation.

This interdenominational summit served as both an educational forum addressing theological doctrine and practice and as a bonafide revival meeting replete with prayer, singing and shouting, inspiring its attendants to continue the struggle with renewed courage. The list of facilitators included such luminaries as Rev. Rainey Cheeks (Inner Light Unity Fellowship), Phil Wilson (AIDS Project Los Angeles) and Atlanta's own Byllye Avery (National Black Woman's Health Project) and Dr. Barbara King (Hillside). This diverse mix of pastors, gay activists and educators brought forth a wide range of vision and expertise.

The opening ceremony included an African libation, an HIV-focused invocation and greetings from Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Woman) and Dorothy Triplett (Center for Disease Control). Following the commencement, a panel of PWAs shared their stories of adversity and triumph as long-term survivors of HIV and other challenges (incest, substance abuse, neglect). The second day opened with a responsive reading calling to "God of the gay and God of the straight...God of Us All...Grant that in this safe space the silence will be broken so that the healing of HIV and AIDS may begin."

The workshop plenary offered an impressive menu of topics such as "The Church Beyond Homophobia" and "The Sexual and Emotional Health of Black Women." The black theology workshop provided provocative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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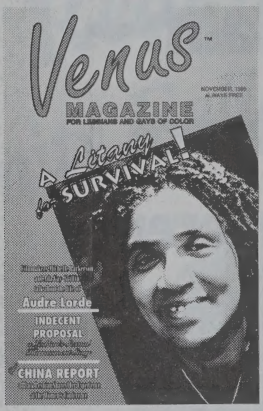

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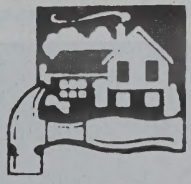

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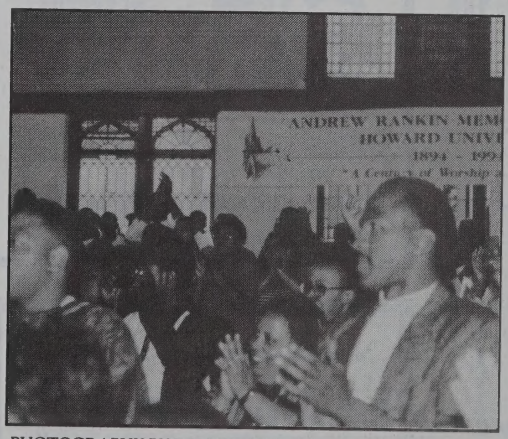
insights regarding the Church's stance on sin and acceptance. Rev. Kelly Douglas stated that we must examine the black community in a historical context in order to understand how the Church "sees" and interprets God. In his address about homophobia, Dr. West underscored the Church's responsibility to grapple honestly with the sexual lives of his congregants. "Underneath our dresses and our three-piece suits we are all funky creatures," Dr. West attested, Author Haki Madhubuti facilitated a workshop entitled "The Sexual Responsibility of Black Men" and neglected to mention gay and bisexual issues. When challenged by the attendants, Madhubuti claimed to have insufficient knowledge of the subject. One of the participants cautioned, "You need to learn."

The final day began with a rousing rendition of "There is A Balm in Gilead" and offered a series of skill-building tracks. I attended the "HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Training for Ministers" delivered by Rev. Terri Griffen-Price (H.E.A.L.) and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones (Howard Univ). Thank you God for Rv. Price, a passionate speaker who got happy she advised us how to approach religious leaders. She advised us to challenge intolerant pastors and any theologies bereft of compassion. Dr. Farajaje-Jones addressed "erotophobia" (fear of the erotic and its power) and "gynophobia" (fear and hatred of women) as processes that fuel hostility towards gays and lesbians. The workshop offered methods of developing curricula to train leaders to respond to HIV/AIDS with compassion and competency.

I was deeply moved by the level of commitment among those in attendance. It was so refreshing to witness such exuberance despite the barriers which often thwart our work. I returned from this meeting feeling completely recharged, my wavering faith restored. I am happy to announce that several Atlantan spiritual leaders and activists are collaborating to organize a Week of Prayer during which churches and mosques would devote their energies to address HIV/AIDS in their congregations and community. Like the Harlem-based original event, the Week of Prayer can be celebrated through a gospel concert, ministry, bereavement service, revival, seminar or any activity motivated by a healing spirit. The Week of Prayer is tentatively scheduled for the first week of March 1996. Brothers and sisters in the life (closeted or not) need to take active roles in this event and the planning process has already begun. For more information,



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

The Worship Service at the Second Annual Black Church National Educational and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS held May 22–24 at Howard University. (Top) New York's Marjorie Hill joins in, at right.

Redefining Our Faith

By Rev. S.F. Ma-Hee

The year is 1995 and African-American people who are "In The Life" are reclaiming an intricately heretical aspect of their culture— black church. After having collars and Bibles used to invalidate and oppress us, we can now use them as a source of freedom and liberation. We are finally moving toward the acceptance that God is love, and love is for everyone, regardless of race, creed, physical or financial ability, or sexual orientation.

There has never been any doubt about our existence or contribution to the black church, and we have done so and probably will continue to do so despite being denied the liberty to do so. The Unity Fellowship Church movement and Bishop Carl Bean have empowered those who have been robbed and stripped of family and community via the church.

Gail Booker, Tony Daniels, Michael-Tone Covington, Tamara Irons, and Reverend S.F. Ma-Hee (left to right), Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship members at the National Unity Convocation in Los Angeles.

No longer do we have to live in fear of going to hell for loving another human being. Freedom is here. No longer do we have to put aside being African-American to worship as les/bi/gay/trans people. For we now have a worship institution of our very own.

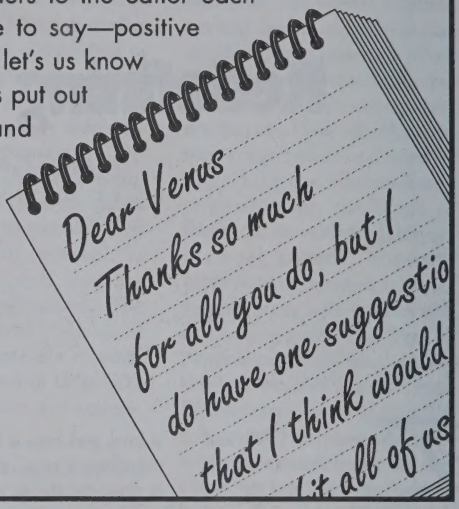
It's 1995, and Unity Fellowship Church is carrying its message of liberation theology to black gay people through its nine churches, in the United States.

It's 1995, and we now serve proudly and openly in church offices that we have always held.

It's 1995, and our people finally at last have the choice. Somebody, anybody say Amen.

We Love Hearing From You

Our favorite job is opening the letters to the editor each month. No matter what you have to say—positive feedback or constructive criticism, it let's us know you're out there and care to help us put out the best publication for lesbians and gay men of color.



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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Linus Lynell

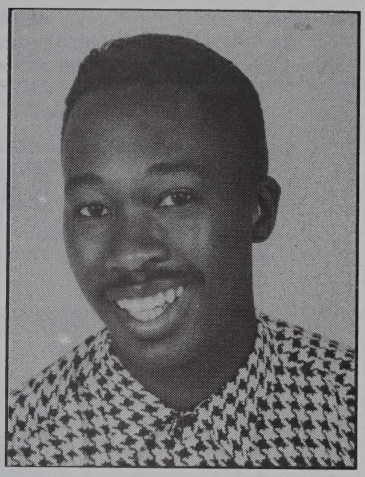
Age:..... 31

Status:..... Very single

Career: ..... Non-profit administrator; Performing artist

Hometown:.. Flint, Michigan

Latest Book:. "Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America" by Nathan McCall



Linus is currently living in Dallas, Texas, and loves his work as Associate Coordinator for The Men's Gathering, a social support group for African-American men. He is also anspiring writer and will soon contribute articles about the black gay male experience in Dallas.

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Center Stage AT LAST!

Oleta Adams performs for HRCF

Songstress/Diva Oleta Adams.

Over 1,500 people turned out at the Fabulous Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit for the Human Rights Campaign Fund's Michigan Dinner.

The black-tie event entitled "Center Stage at Last" could have just as easily been named "One Enchanted Evening."

The top two floors were reserved for a pre-event, the annual Women's Ice Breaker (very appropriately named). The third level hosted Washington V.I.P.'s and other dignitaries including Detroit's mayor, Dennis Archer.

Socialite June Washington, the women's outreach chair and African-American lesbian/Diva, is credited for the largest black gay and lesbian turnout at an HRCF event ever. (At $150–$300 per plate, that's some pretty fierce networking!)

Cheryl Troup, also a lesbian of color, served as Primary Event co-chair. Cheryl feels that the campaign's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, is not only sincere by very serious about changing the stoic white male image traditionally associated with its annual events.

The evening began with a broadway style strolling dinner. When the lights finally dimmed, we found our seats and were dazzled by comedian Georgia Ragsdale. We roared with laughter as she talked about what it's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Commedienne Georgia Ragsdale.

like to visit a gay male bar. "BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! You can feel the music pounding six blocks away!"

Ragsdale might be the first out lesbian to hit network television with her own show, a sitcom series set to air this fall on ABC.

Her co-host, actor Dan Butler, of "Roseanne," "Picket Fences," and "X-Files" to name a few was equally entertaining; "I'm not a straight guy but I play one on T.V."

The highlight of the evening was a sizzling performance by two-time Grammy nominee Oleta Adams. She swooned us with all our favorites, including "Circle of One," "Get Here," "Hold Me for Awhile," and "Window of Hope."

Oleta says she identifies with singers like Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. "You can hear the purity of sound and emotion, but also the discipline, technique and sophistication. That's what my music is all about. Getting back to the part that's been left out since this synthetic, sterile, non-feeling sound has come in. Everyone wants to classify me, put me in a category. This is highly emotional music, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's time to get back to romance."

Calm down girls!! This diva is happily married to drummer John Cushon. Oleta says, "I made him wait twelve years! A girl's got to be sure!" Look for her new CD, entitled "Moving On," to be released in late November.

As the applause faded the scene changed to a serious "house party" in the Grand Lobby, complete with dancing, exotic cocktails and hot music by D.J. Serend 'N' Effect Tyler.

Activist/Diva June Washington (2nd from Left) and Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran (2nd from right) pose with members of Detroit's Billionaire's Boy Club in the Grand Lobby.

Fabulous Belinda Jefferies of HRCF's Women's Committee at Detroit's Fox Theatre. Marketing Director for a family-owned business, Belinda was also director of sales for the annual program booklet.

Hats off to HRCF Detroit! Who says a bunch of people in formal wear can't have fun?!

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

SisterHelp Community Fund, along with Hospitality Atlanta, Sisters of 30 Something Special and Dyfferent Gyrl Productions, is asking for donations to assist Cindi Joshua, a friend and sister to our community. Ms. Joshua is in need of a kidney transplant, and financial contributions, medical referrals, information and/or suggestions are welcome. Please call 707-6866 with any help.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute presents the **8th Annual Creating Change Conference for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Movement!** To be held **November 10–12, 1995** at the Westin Hotel Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan. Featured guests include **Elias Farajaje-Jones** (a Spanish speaking, afrikan, native-american and an anarchist guerilla, theologian/AIDS terorrist/writer/cultural critic/performance artist/ritual technician) and **Urvashi Vaid** (a community organizer and attorney, past NGLTF executive director and author of Virtual Equality.)

On October 19, Deputy Assistant to President Clinton, Marshe Scott, wrote Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Humanr Rights Campaign Fund: "I am pleased to let you know that on Friday, Oct. 20, 1995, the **President will formally endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.** As the Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, I know that you and your organization have worked tirelessly to promote passage of this important legislation. The leadership role taken by the Human Rights Campaign to rally public support for this issue has culminated in the bi-partisan endorsements from over 157 members of Congress. The President is delighted to join with you and our many friends in Congress who endorse and support this important civil rights legislation."

Neighborhood Playhouse will hold auditions for "To Kill a Mockingbird" with cold readings at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday November 12th and Monday, November 13th. Needed are 1 African-American male (18–50) and 1 African-American female (20–50). No appointment necessary. Call 404/373-3904 for more information.

AID Atlanta now offers a **Support Group for African-American Men Living with HIV/AIDS.** Group meets every Tuesday from 7–9 p.m. at AID Atlanta offices (1438 W. Peachtree St., NW, Ste 100.) Call 404-885-6800, ext. 231 for more information.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta 1996. The First Community-Wide meeting for Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Celebration will be held at Karats Niteclub, 511 Peachtree Street, downtown Atlanta (across from Crawford Long. The meeting will begin promptly at 7 p.m. The agenda will include a review of Pride '95, new ideas for '96 and discussion about Board and Steering Committee selections. All are welcome! Let's make Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96 a world-class event!

Artists in all disciplines (except film) are being sought for the **Fourth Annual Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (AGALAF).** The festival willbe held in Decatur **April 11–14, 1996.** Deadline for submissions is Nov. 15 ($10 fee) and Dec. 15 ($15 fee). For entry forms, call 404/874-8710 or write AGALAF, P.O. Box 55475, Atlanta, GA 30308.

Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund was announced by Zami for African-American lesbians in Atlanta. This scholarship will be awarded to an African-American lesbian student who best embodies the spirit of Audre Lorde. All financial contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to Zami at P.O. Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

World AIDS Day

December 1, 1995

On World AIDS Day, an international event held on December 1 each year to bring awareness to the pandemic, will be commemorated by a number of activities hosted by AID Atlanta. The World AIDS Day 1995 theme, "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities," highlights the importance of equality and solidarity in the global response to AIDS.

The Atlanta Hawks, who will play the Mavericks on December 1, will host "Time Out for Awareness," and donate a portion of their proceeds to a number of local AIDS charities. Call (404) 827-DUNK for more information. Also during the day, houses of worship and individuals are asked to ring a bell fifteen times, once for each year of the epidemic, at 1:50 p.m. AID Atlanta is asking people to participate in this event by purchasing a handmade, limited edition, silver plated bell at the benefit art gallery Koolhipfunkystuff, located at 1030 Monroe Drive. Bells can also be purchased by calling the gallery at (404) 607-1095, and all proceeds will benefit AID Atlanta.

The opportunity to educate people about HIV/AIDS will be a priority for AID Atlanta on World AIDS Day, and a number of educational events are scheduled. AID Atlanta youth peer educators will be at North Atlanta High School doing presentations "Teen to Teen" in health education classes, and at the Centers for Disease Control participating in panel discussions on issues relating to teens and HIV. These peer educators will also present to the Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, and at St. Luke's Episcopal Church High School on Sunday, December 3.

WAOS Radio, a Spanish speaking station located at 1600 AM will air the documentary, "AIDS Does Not Discriminate" on December 1, after which listeners will have the opportunity to speak with bilingual staff persons at the Georgia AIDS Information Line (800) 551-2728, a state service available in conjunction with AID Atlanta. There will also be a mobilization of AID Atlanta's Hispanic Outreach Workers, who will visit Hispanic community groups, grocery stores, and beauty parlors to provide visitors with HIV/AIDS information.

AID Atlanta's African-American Outreach team will distribute red ribbons and flyers at key MARTA stations, and will also assist the Atlanta University Center in their World AIDS Day program at Spelman's Living and Learning Center. The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual outreach volunteers will conduct a "Bar Blitz," distributing safer sex kits and promoting a "Get Tested" message by providing information on HIV testing locations.

The AID Atlanta Speaker's Bureau will experience their busiest day of the year, with engagements booked at schools, work places, churches and community groups, with additional requests still being made. To schedule a speaker, please contact Chris Parsons (404) 885-6800, ext. 231. AID Atlanta volunteers are also staffing booths at a number of health fairs across the city.

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

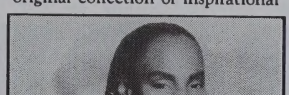
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities **November 22–26.** Featured activi-

ties include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't;" workshops on "Gay Life in Africa" and "A Gathering of Old Queens;" and a closing dinner dance.

The first meeting for the **Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS Planning Commission was held on Oct. 21** at Believe and Receive Ministry. This Commission will include a diverse mix of African-American clergy, community workers and volunteers who will collaborate to establish a Week of Prayer in March 1996 for African-American churches in Atlanta. The goal of this event is to enjoin the faith community, mass media and gospel radio stations to broaden HIV awareness, education and services for our people. Based on the Harlem Week of Prayer in New York (established in 1988), the Week of Prayer is a coordinated week of activities in which participants can demonstrate their commitment in various ways (gospel concert, food drive, HIV seminar, bereavement service). The Planning Committee will actually determine how the Week of Prayer will be observed in Atlanta. This is an historic opportunity to develop an HIV/AIDS awareness event which the African-American community can embrace as its own. We would like you to be a part of the planning process. The institute for Minority AIDS Prevention Studies (I-MAPS) will provide technical assistance for the Atlanta replication of the Week of Prayer. For more information please call Craig Washington at (404) 885-6800 X277 or Pastor Julia Robinson at (404) 286-9309.

Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief of Essence will be in Atlanta Nov. 17-18, promoting her new book, "Lessons in Living." Book signings will be held at Visions 3000, Clarkston, Ga., Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m.; Chapter 11, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m.; and Truth Bookstore, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m. "Lessons in Living(Anchor Books, Hardcover; Nov. 7, 1995; $19.95), is an entirely original collection of inspirational



writing in which the celebrated provides insight into the universal quest for faith and spiritually that inevitably occurs as a result of life's challenges. It explores issues that are of interest to all people: self-empowerment, love, self-worth, faith and commitment, and the journey of life. For more information call Truth Bookstore at 404/523-3240.

Elizabeth Glaser, co-founder of the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, **was the recipient of a Special Inspiration Award presented by The Noel Foundation/The United Nations Development Fund for Women** in October at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, Calif. The award was presented as part of the Noel Foundation/UNIFEM Awards Ceremony, "A Celebration of Inspiration and Commitment" that honored six outstanding women from around the world, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Glaser died of complications from AIDS on Dec. 3, 1994. The only foundation of its kind in the US, the Pediatric AIDS Foundation identifies, funds and conducts basic research into the prevention and treatment of HIV infection, as well as providing public education and information about the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS among women and children. For more information contact Victoria Thomas, Communications Manager, Pediatric AIDS Foundation, (310) 395-9051.

The Kick Publishing Co has successfully published its ambitious new publication, entitled KICK! Magazine for one full year. The primary focus of this bold monthly publication is to explore black gay and lesbian urban culture in America from a conservative midwestern perspective. Over the past year this publication has challenged itself to explore the diversity of a lifestyle which receives little to no attention from popular mainstream or major gay and lesbian publications.

Shades of Life

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Ten Percent in the Million Man March

by Keith Boykin

"Black by Birth/Gay by God/Proud by Choice." Those were the words my trembling hands scribbled on the posterboard in the brisk morning air at a black gay rally a few hours before the Million Man March.

Hundreds of black gay men and a handful of lesbians joined me on that Monday in an historic openly gay contingent in the Million Man March, proudly representing the tens of thousands of black gay men who were there but could not be a part of our group. Our pre-march rally drew prominent speakers from around the country, including noted civil rights activist Derrick Bell, who is heterosexual, and the black, openly gay mayor of Cambridge, Kenneth Reeves.

Uncertain what lies ahead, we left our rally and quietly began the 30-minute procession to the Million Man March assembly on the Mall. A few passersby hurriedly moved out of the way, two people driving their cars along the adjoining streets honked their horns in support and a number of pedestrians on the other side of the street stopped and stared.

Sensing no negative reaction to our presence, our group grew increasingly ambitious and empowered. We began to chant: "We're Black! We're Gay! We wouldn't have it any other way!" Still no one in the crowed of people we approached reacted critically. The chant became louder and bolder: "Gay Men! (Woof). Of African Descent." As we marched into the multitude of people assembled on the blocked off streets, the crowd reaction seemed to change from curiosity to intimidation and the throngs of black men parted like the Red Sea in front of us.

A police officer on motorcycle idled alongside our group as if he anticipated a confrontation. But as we marched closer and closer to the rally stage, the crowd reaction grew increasingly and overwhelmingly positive, and even enthusiastic. Some raised their fists in solidarity, dozens whipped out their cameras and video equipment to take pictures, but only one of the thousands of people I saw did or said anything homophobic. Gesturing his

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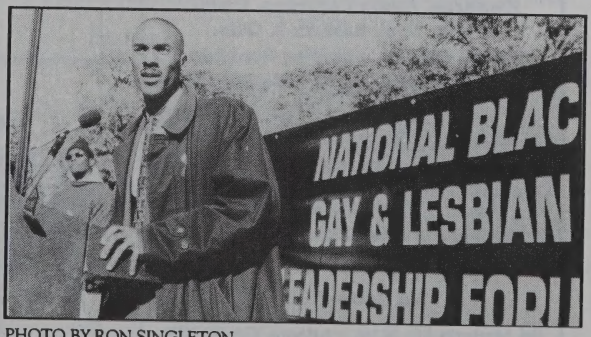

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Keith Boykin, executive director of Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum at the Million Man March pre-rally.

A Litany for Survival:
The Life and Work of Audre Lorde

Charis, ZAMI & Emory's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life proudly present
A LITANY FOR SURVIVAL: THE LIFE AND WORK OF AUDRE LORDE at 4 p.m. & 8 p.m.
Harland Cinema Emory Univ. campus, to benefit ZAMI'S Audre Lorde scholarship fund. Reception following 8 p.m. showing with the director Michelle Parkerson & producer Ada Gay Griffin. $5 admission at the door. Charis Books & More 524-0304.

Truth Bookstore

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Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief of Essence will be signing her new book, "Lessons in Living." Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m.

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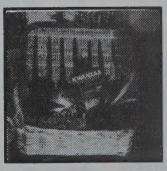

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thumbs downward, he yelled, "God didn't make no mistakes." One of our group shot back, "You're right!" We kept marching.

The lesson in this experience is that when we believe in ourselves enough to come out of the closet and be open about who we are as black gay men and lesbians, our community not only accepts us, they respect us more. For many march participants, that Monday was the first time they had ever seen black homosexuals openly, visibly and unabashedly acknowledging themselves as part of the black community. Given the opportunity to succumb to peer pressure prejudice, they took the high road and greeted our participation. They know that the battle for black liberation requires many soldiers, and in this army, at least, gays are welcome in the military.

What happened on the Mall that day was the beginning of the revolution in our thinking as black people and as black gay people. Black men loving black men is a revolutionary act. In a culture whose popular music and film glorify black-on-black violence, the simple act of loving our brothers as brothers becomes an act of rebellion against the fratricidal status quo.

Who is better suited to help black men learn the value of loving one another as brothers than black gay men, who have been loving one another as brothers for years? Who is better suited to demonstrate to black men how to care for and show affection for one another than black gay men, who have been caring for and showing affection towards one another when no one else would? And who is better suited to lead the long overdue revolution against patriarchy and violence against women than black gay men? Indeed, as Black Panther leader Huey Newton presciently observed in 1970, "a homosexual could be the most revolutionary" of the revolutionaries.

"It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being an African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population."

"That's beautiful," he said.

I saw the revolution in the faces of brothers who smiled at me, or the ones who shook my hand and greeted me at the march. One brother asked about the sticker I wore on my coat, a cutout of the African continent in the gay movement's rainbow colors. "What does that mean?" "It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being and African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population." "That's beautiful," he said.

Despite the welcome extended by the march participants, the march organizers and speakers missed two crucial opportunities: first, to include an openly gay speaker, and, second, to teach black men how to save their lives. While AIDS is now the leading cause of death for black men between the ages of 25 and 44, the message of AIDS prevention was never discussed at the march. Unfortunately, this disease will continue to take a toll on our community so long as black people and our so-called leaders remain to afraid to address publicly issues of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation.

Nevertheless, I hope the presence of our openly gay contingent will help to begin the much needed dialogue on black sexuality and teach the march organizers what the vast majority of rank and file marchers already know: black gay men and lesbians are not a threat to black unity—they are the key to it.

Keith Boykin is Executive Director of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and author of the forthcoming book, One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America, to be published by Doubleday.

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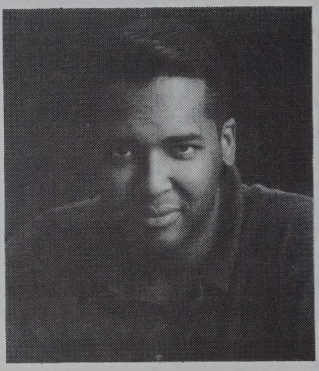

Like me, you probably expect professionalism and experience and appreciate privacy and diversity when it comes to your health care provider.

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Good Doctor, Good Patient

Three AIDS care experts have published Good Doctors, Good Patients: Partners in HIV Treatment to communicate the personal qualities, attitudes, and medical strategies that they have found to be associated with prolonged and healthier survival among people with HIV. Written for people with HIV, their caregivers and doctors, the book reflects the author's professional and personal experiences, including their AIDS long-term Survivor Study, which followed nearly 100 men and women with HIV and featured interviews with 25 leading AIDS specialists.

"Good Doctors, Good Patients provides important insights into critical issues involved in the relationship between a person with HIV and his or her health care provider." commented David M. Gold, former Executive Editor, Gay Men's Health Crisis' Treatment Issues. "It is useful for people with AIDS, their friends, family, caregivers, and especially health care providers and mental health professionals."

"The book is extremely helpful" says Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran, "It told exactly how to handle my feelings of helplessness during a friend's terminal illness."

Copies of Good Doctors, Good Patients may be obtained from NCM publishers for $4.50 for shipping and handling. Requests should be sent to NCM publishers at: NCM Publishers, Dept. JL; 200 Varick St.; New York, NY 10014. Those wishing to receive multiple copies should contact Judy Leong at (212) 691-9100.

The book itself is being provided free of charge as a service by Burroughs Wellcome Co. The company discovered, developed, and manufactures a wide range of therapies for the management of HIV disease, and continues to support a broad research program.

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From The Author of **"The Cure for All Cancers"** Now Comes

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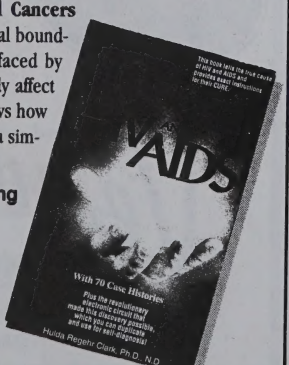

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Night Songs

by Penny Mickelbury, 1995, Naiad

Reviewed by A.J. Hines

Stabbing victims. All prostitutes. A low priority for the Washington, D.C. police Lieutenant Gianna Maglione, the head of the Hate Crimes Unit, feels the crimes have significance and are only the tip of an ugly iceberg. Plagues by homophobia and political patronage, Lt. Maglione forges ahead.

Meanwhile, Maglione's lover, African-American newspaper reporter, Mimi Patterson is combing the perilous streets in search of her missing informants. Lt. Maglione refuses to discuss her cases with her lover. Her stubbornness inadvertently put Mimi and their relationship in danger.

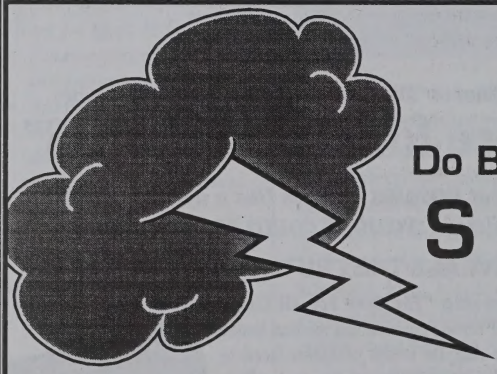
As an African-American writer, Mickelbury is able to address subjects that have traditionally been ignored in the lesbian mystery genre; racism and socio-economic class prejudice.

Night Songs is the second book in the series. Mickelbury's first, Keeping Secrets, pits the police Lt. against the newspaper reporter. They struggle with police procedure that are contrary to the public's right to know. The conflict becomes more complicated by strong sexual feelings.

Mickelbury has strong characters with distinct personalities and similar agendas. However, they have very different approaches which enhances the story and creates real romance.

PHOTOGRAPH BY D.E. HOUSTON

Author Penny Mickelbury



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Miss Dot & Miss Lorde

By Doris L. Harris

On Nov. 17, 1992
10 days before her 50th birthday
my mother let go of the mosaic design
that was her life.
with its missing pieces, delicate thin lines
and healed over slashes,
Cancer hadn't won, she had simply taken her marbles
and moved on,
Same day, another sistuh,
a poet pure,
a lover of women, an explorer
began her own journey,
although they have taken different paths
I know, they'll meet along the way
introductions won't be necessary,
my mother will recognize Miss Lorde as the woman
who wrote all those books, her want to be a radical
call herself a feminist, must be going though a phase
just need a good man, lesbian daughter,
was always sending her, after one of their fights
and Miss Lorde will know Miss Dot very well,
seen her hiding between the lines of her poetry
a weary warrior, who despite her war stories
could never say, I want
I need,
who found out damn near too late
that battle scars, are not love,
they'll embrace
my mother will be the first to let go,
she'll walk away, fast
that's how she walked, talked, lived
Miss Lorde will be able to keep the pace, her legs are
much longer than a nine year old
who's asking for money, to buy a Easter dress,
and she's tougher, as tough as these times have been
for poor black women
and she's wise, wise enough to know that my mother
was running,
from something as unrecognizable as destiny,
with each step, Miss Lorde will see just how fragile
she really was, as fragile as a promise
made to a child

CONCERTS

Atlanta Minority Aids Council and GRP Recording Company Present

URBAN KNIGHTS

featuring Ramsey Lewis Art Porter, Omar Hakim, Victor Bailey Be 2, 8:00 PM at The Lincoln Theater, 1215 U Street, Washington, D.C. For ticket information call (202) 328 6000 or Ticketmaster at (202) 432-SEAT.

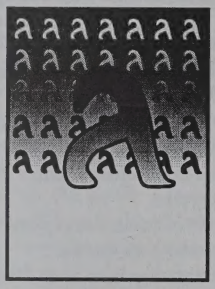
Shades of Life

a concert by Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus, December 2, 1995 * 8:00 PM; $12 advance & $15 at door, $10 student, child, group. Call (770) 438-5823 for information. (Pictured: Chantel Wright, Asst. Director AFWC)

CONFERENCES

Eighth Annual Creating Change Conference sponsored by NGLTF in Detroit, MI, featuring Elias Farajafe-Jones and Urvashi Vaid, among others. Call (202) 332-6483, ext. 3209 for information.

Ninth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership



Foundation Conference, Dallas Texas. February 15–19, 1996. Call (213) 964-7820 for more information.

EVENTS

Nov. 19th—WOOBABI Productions annual trip to

Atlantic City, New Jersey

For information, contact Bobbi & Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

FILM

CLOSING NIGHT FEATURE - Thurs.November 2 at 8 PM Anthology Film Archive (AFA) 32 2nd Avenue @ 2nd Street

Black Nations/ Queer Nations?

directed by Shari Frilot. We are happy to present the World Premiere of this experimental documentary about the historic March 1995 conference which provided an international account of identity politics in black and queer community. Featured participants include South African activists Simon Nkoli & Zachie Achmat, Essex Hemphill, Isaac Julien, Coco Fusco, Kobena Mercer, and Barbara Smith. (Discussion & Closing Night Party to follow).

NO MORE Sweets for You

(Sun, 11/5, 6 PM, KF; Sat, 11/11, 7 PM, AFA) These new film and video shorts unfold the fantasies, trauma and schizophrenia of solo-ness. In an era of corporate grunge, queer modification, empowerment politics and right-wing cyborgs, how do the unassimilated survive without being smashed, named or forced to participate?—Elisabeth Subrin, Curator.

JUNGLI BOOGIE: Queer South Asian Film & Video (Fri, 11/3 PM 9 PM AFA; Sat, 11/11 9 PM KF) A collection of video

and film work by queer South Asian artists from around the world and around the corner. Includes new works by Hima B. and Prathiba Parmar. (And don't miss the after party thrown by SALGA, the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association).—David Dasharath Kalal & Gita' Reddy, Curators.

On Thurs., November 16th, 1995 at 7:00 PM, The Atlanta African Film Society's 11th Annual Hoyt Fuller Festival Film, co-sponsored with Morris Brown College International Student Series, will premiere

CHOCOLATE CITY

a film that takes a realistic look at today's college life. CHOCOLATE CITY, a student-made, feature length film, shot on Florida A&M University campus, stresses the importance of making sound decisions in the nineties.. The film will premier at Morris Brown College, 643 Martin Luther King Drive, SW in Atlanta. For further information, please call the Atlanta African Film Society's Hot-line number (404) 818-6444. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members

Also, on Friday, 7 PM, November 17th at Georgia Pacific Auditorium, 133 Peachtree St in downtown Atlanta, The Hoyt Fuller Film Festival continues with NY filmmaker, Camille Billops, and James Hatch introducing their latest feature, the

KKK BOUTIQUE AIN'T JUST REDNECKS

It's a film that examines the issues of racism in America. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members.

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will

celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities November 22–26. Featured activities include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't" and many more activities (see 411 in this issue for details.)

GALLERY OPENINGS

November 10–30: The Recent Works of Michael Morgan, Didier Cameau, Quashelle Curtis, William Downs, III, and

Kemba Sewer. The five African Americans cover the entire spectrum of art. Michael and Quashelle are painters. Their pieces are brightly colored and instantly appealing. Didier is the sculptor in the group, working mostly in metal, and uses the figure as a starting point for his more abstract compositions. William works both in printmaking and drawing, very figurative and stylized. Finally, Kemba has chosen the computer as her tool. Her images are very personal and deal with her childhood, growing up black in America. Artists' reception Friday, November 10, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

MEETING

Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96

Community Wide Meeting will be held at Karats, Monday, Nov. 20, 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blue Jeans/ Black Tie

New Year's Eve Affair by Green Eyes Production. Sunday, December 31, 1995. $20. 10 PM–3 AM. Baltimore. 997-9443.

CELEBRATE KWANZAA

with Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church with a Kwanzaa Celebration for Brothers and Sisters in the Life. Featuring Drummers, Dancers, Cultural Presentations and a Pot Luck Meal. 2:30 PM. Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atlanta. 404/388-4624. Bring your favorite covered dish.

Fourth Annual

Sparkle Nite

"Pre" New Years Eve Blow out, NY Hosted by Rachel & Co. (718) 842-2929.

E.U.N.I.C.E. presents a

Silk & Satin New Year's Eve Weekend

at the Fabulous Valley Forge Sheraton Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA. Weekend package features three days/two nights hotel accommodations. All inclusive special rate of $149 per person/double occupancy valid until Nov. 6, 1995. Ask for Dazzle Production Rates. For more information call 215-242-4255.

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GALA

10:00 PM - 3:00 AM Bronx, New York; Open Bar, Buffet, Champagne, $50.00 per person. Bess Knowings 718-992-9073.

VENUS MAGAZINE's 1st Anniversary. Celebration. January 13–16. Watch for Details Next Issue.

Venus™ MAGAZINE FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

PARTIES

November 10...

FIESTA!

Getting Older Latin Style by Cha-Cha Productions. 11 PM–4 AM. Revolutions, Atlanta. (404) 621-5743.

Dec. 9th—Gloria Wells & Associates Annual Holiday

House Party

at the Days Inn, Washington, D.C., TIME: 10-3:00 AM Tickets $12 in advance & $15 at the door. For information, please contact (301) 596-6167.

Dec. 10th—NEFERTITI PRODUCTIONS present

A Holidy Extravaganza

at Club Bunns, 608 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD TIME: 4-9 PM for information, contact Bobbi Moore at (301) 596-6167 or Winnie at (202) 484-0550.

READINGS

A poetry reading for the upcoming anthology

COLORS OF EXPRESSION

To be held at A Room of Our Own Bookstore (444 9th Street, Brooklyn) November 7 at 7 P.M. Submissions still being accepted for this unique, creative work of men and women of color who are living with AIDS. The theme for works of poetry, prose and art slated to appear is "Living Our Lives Day to Day." For more information about submitting work, please call (718) 499-6937.

THEATER

The Atlanta Ballet presents

Planet Dance

Guest Artists: Albert Evans and Wendy Whelan, NY City Ballet; For tickets call (404) 875-9081.

December 7–9, and 14–16—Comfort Zone Productions presents

The Best of Love Letters

by Kimbley Gilchrist and

PIPE DREAMS

and

The Christian and the Jewess

by Ira L. Jeffries, Starring Cheryl L. McClendon and Judi Smith. A series of one-act plays exploring various issues including women and AIDS, opposing viewpoints on religion and sexuality, women and war, drugs and rekindling old flames. Shows at Amuse America, 599 Broadway at Houston. Tickets: $12 in advance, $15 at the door. For information and reservations, call 212-726-1322 or 718-802-9037.

November 22 —December 10—7 Stages Theatre, in Little Five Points, 1105 Euclid Ave. presents

RIFFS

by Bill Harris. A special show to benefit AIDS Education/Services for Minorities will be held Sunday, Dec. 10. Call (404) 753-2900 for tickets/information this showing only.

A hilarious and charming story of four older African-American men who meet daily to read the newspaper, lie, and signify. In a play that combines humor, history, and hope, the retired men of the North End Preservation Association tell stories that reveal the importance and the richness of the African-American experience in the 20th Century. For tickets (404) 522-0911.

November 17–November 19—

EL CIMARRON

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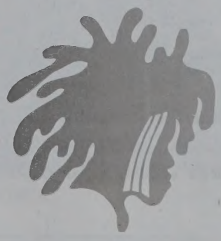
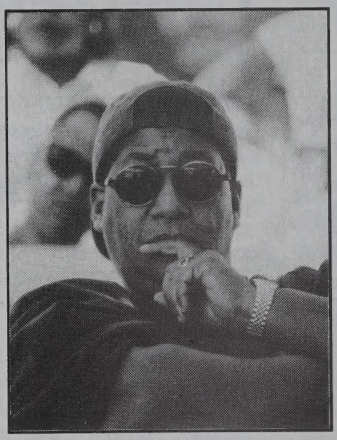
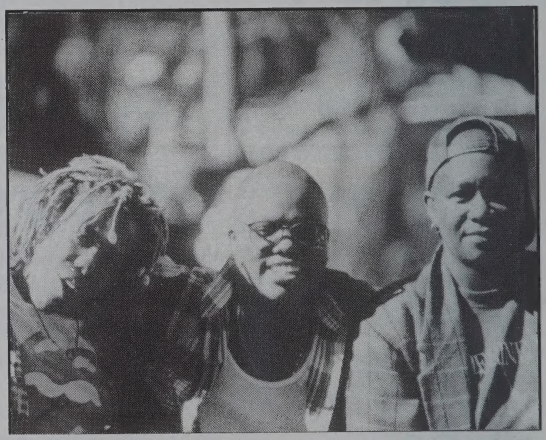


OUT & about



Writer Margret Sloan-Hunter, author of Black & Lavendar, *at Uloah Sister Fest.*

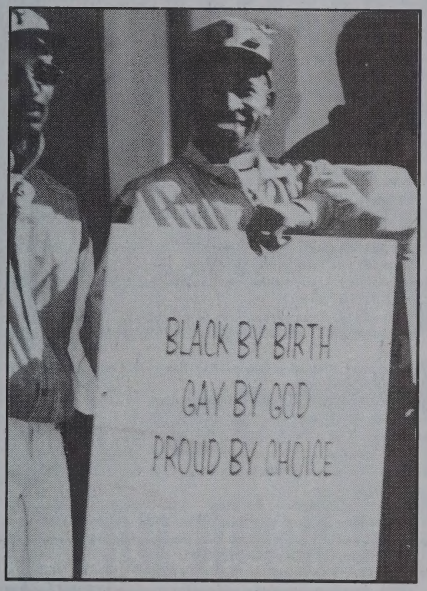


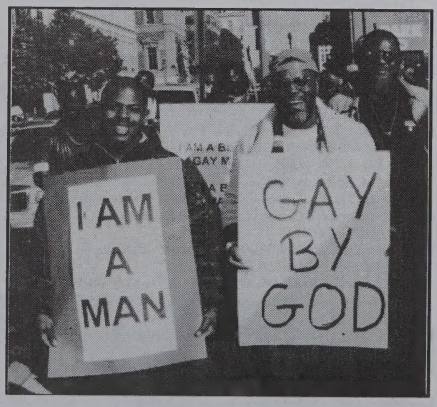
(Left to Right) Jeanine Woodson, Glinda Smith, and Sharon Noble (author of Lesbian Bedtime Stories), all from California.

Michael-Tone Covington, Tony Daniels and Tre Johnson (l–r) at the Venus headquarters during a poetry-reading fundraiser.

Linda Harrison, GA State Univ. Law Professor, and her partner, Joan Garner, executive director of The Fund for Southern Communities, during the Stonewall Bar Assoc.'s 1st Annual Awards Banquet last month

1,000,000 African-American Men Marching on D.C. × 10% =





ALL PHOTOGRAPHY THIS PAGE BY RON SINGLETON

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl, GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Creation Woman—poets/artists and affiliates meet last Sunday in the month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Comm. Organization. Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlatna, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl, GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, P.O. Box 11705, Atlanta, GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atl., GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atlanta, GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—P.O. Box 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikat@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesb. party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,
Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.
Crossroads with Baldelie Jones—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.
Sister Love, Sister's Time—6 PM Thursdays
"Alternative Talk"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18: Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): Wednesday evenings 8:30-10:00.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

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a Lesbian's Sexual Harrassment Story

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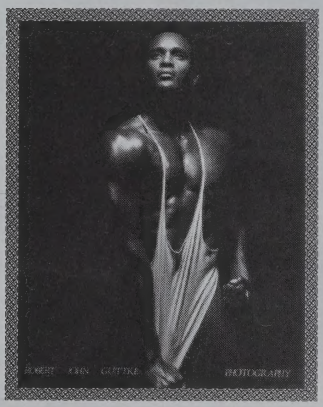

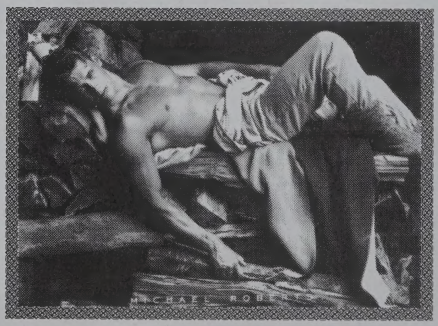

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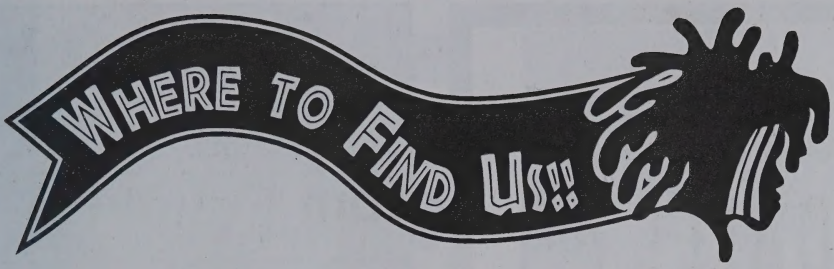

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Venus™
MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

October 1995
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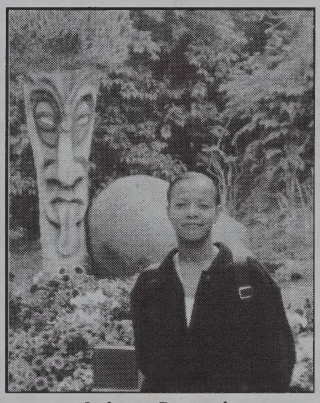
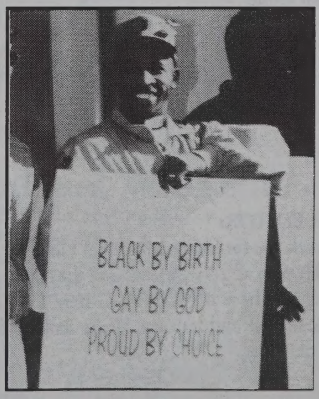
Climbing the wall in China.



Indecent Proposals



Crashing the Million Man March with our own 10% Club.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

LETTERS

DEAR EDITOR,

Thanks for creating a voice in Atlanta. I look forward to reading your publication. However, I have one concern. I am a middle-aged person (44) and find it difficult to find articles, books etc. relating to persons in my age group. It would be interesting to read an articles periodically, focusing on older or mature persons. Think about it.

Once again, thank you.

DEAR EDITOR:

Horahee! Just a note to congratulate you on a professional, informative, down-to-earth publication. This is only a beginning!

Charles B. Tarver
Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR,

I am writing first to commend you and your staff for printing such a fine and informative publication. "Venus" is definitely a newsworthy magazine, and I pray that it's distribution will be more widespread in the near future.

Linus Lynell
Dallas, TX

DEAR EDITOR:

Thank you for Venus Magazine! I love it!! I have shared it with all of my friends and they also enjoyed reading it. There is NOTHING here for African-American gays and lesbians. We're looking forward to the next one!

Waletta Scott
Las Vegas, NV

DEAR EDITOR,

You may be surprised to learn exactly how remarkably reknowned Venus Magazine is. Your "Where to Find Us" page doesn't do you justice.

Venus has transcended the orderly world of free society and miraculously been found inside the gay prison society.

You've proved to be an entertaining, intelligent and informative companion. Thank you for reducing the isolation of my imprisonment.

Vernon Beal
Jefferson City, MO

DEAR EDITOR:

I picked up Venus Magazine at the Visitor's Bureau at Underground. A nice lady handed it to me when I inquired about gay and lesbian Atlanta. Keep up the good work. We need you!

Viola
Brooklyn, NY

DEAR EDITOR,

Alright!, Alright, Alright!!!

I happened to stumble across a copy of your magazine at the recently held First Annual Out-Charlotte Festival. Enclosed is my subscription. I look forward to reading the entire magazine. And if there is any way I can help out please feel free to let me know! Great job! It does my heart good and I look forward to hearing from you!!

C. David Wingate
Asheville, NC

P.S.: You have the beginnings of something phenomenal—Hang in there!!

PROFILE OF A WOMAN

Name: . . . . . Yvonne "Evee" Smith Adams

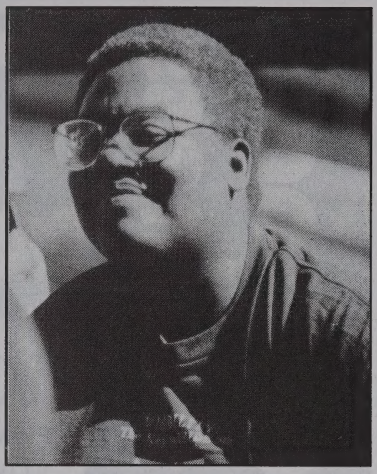
Age: 41

Status: . . . . . To Be Arranged

Career: . . . . . College Advisor/Instructor

Hometown: . . Washington, D.C.

Latest Book: . "Hunter" by Margaret Sloan



As an advisor at Oregan State University, Evee's motto is "I am who I am, I have the right to go wherever I want. I'm responsible for my own joy and happiness in life."

Women At Large

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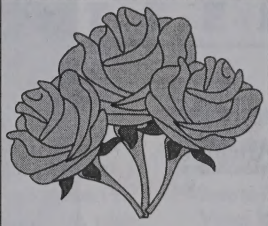

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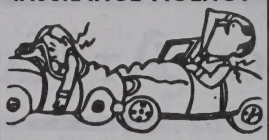

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Traveling to China: A Spiritual Journey

By Wanda Alston

Lately, I have been asked if I considered myself black first or a woman first. Some Black women may say that I am Black first. For me, I am a woman first because of the household I grew up in with eight males and five females. Growing up, my parents have never addressed me as a "black person." A number of references were made to my gender and the limitations that went with being a girl. I felt oppressed as a girl before I ever stepped outside my door into the world of sexism, racism classism, homophobia..

PHOTO COURTESY WANDA ALSTON

At the U.N. Conference on Women's Issues, Wanda Alston (l), Zachie Achmat from South Africa (c), and Valleria Wagner (r), NBGLLF co-chair.

I went to China wondering how I was going to find the niche that would let me know why I was there. I found that niche immediately as a feminist. I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did. I was a U.S.. citizen from North America. This is very different from being a citizen of South America or Central America. I was given a class distinction that I had not experienced in the U.S. As a result, I was faced with some issues that I was not ready to deal with.

The aspect of "class" that I was forced to deal with was not about being poor, middle class or rich. My class distinction was about freedom to express your ideas and thoughts and the opportunity to lift yourself from poverty and physical abuse.

This distinction was particularly clear when I spoke with and observed the women of China. In this communist country, women are treated with less respect than men. They also have very little say so when it comes to education and exchange of ideas and art. These distinctions were also true in many other countries as well.

During the conference, I had an excellent opportunity to network with women from a number of different fields. Patricia Ireland, President of NOW (National Organization for Women), and I co-led a delega-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

tion of thirty NOW members. The group was part of a larger U.S. delegation of 500 women and about 50 Chinese women as part of a U.S.-China Joint Conference on Women's issues in Beijing. Each organization had delegates who were invited to share their professional and organizational experiences. Many of the participants were from the fields of science, technology, medicine, sports and business.

The two day work session was very diverse and covered topics including: violence against women, achieving justice for women, and careers in engineering, etc.

One of the prevailing factors that all the women agreed upon was the fact that a glass ceiling does exist in China as well as the U.S. Women are only able to advance to a certain point on the employment ladder. Beyond that point, males hold the high paying prestigious jobs.

This was discussed in a workshop I attended concerning the women of China. Ninety-five percent of the top management positions in China are held by men with women holding only 5 of those positions. One reason for this is the mandatory retirement of women when they reach the age of 55. The women are then responsible for caring for the elderly.

The first week of my trip was full of cultural site seeing. I was able to visit the Summer Palace, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and Temple of Heaven. These sites were an integral part of understanding the Chinese people and their culture.

We traveled throughout the city in 17 buses and ate our meals at the most exquisite restaurants in Beijing. The people of China had no problem feeding 500 people in one sitting. We would arrive at a restaurant, sit down and begin eating all at the same time. The average Chinese meal is approximately ten courses. Meals included a variety of foods including: vegetables, rice, fish, beef and chicken. The food was delicious. I must say, however, that by the time I returned to the U.S., I was glad not to eat Chinese food for a while.

There were a number of correlations between the Chinese women and the U.S. women. There is an old Chinese proverb which says, "women hold up half the sky." This statement was made during the cultural revolution by Mao. The statement refers to the need for the involvement of women if economic and political change is to take place. Women must be a part of the planning and decision making regarding country and governmental affairs at every level. In addition, if any governmental affairs at every level in addition, if any change is to take place in discrimination and human rights violations of women and children, we must unite with women whose culture and ideas may be like ours and find a common ground to bring about equality, development and peace.

I thought of myself as a feminist on a mission ready to talk about what it is like being a Black lesbian in Washington, D.C. Shortly after my arrival, I realized that my lesbianism and race did not set me apart from others but my citizenship did.

The theme of the NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) Forum was "Equality, Development and Peace." My most memorable moment came at the opening ceremonies of the NGO Forum which took place on August 30, 1995 at the Olympic stadium. The event alone was spectacular. There was a feeling of unity and love from the crowd of 10,000 people from around the world. The people of China did a wonderful job of entertaining the global audience of the many women from 180 countries. They had participants from around China including men, women and children, old and very young.

The passing of the torch was a wonderful part of the opening ceremonies. Women from every country represented at the World Conference on Women passed the torch of equality, development and peace. This served not only to open the ceremony but to symbolize the uniting to discuss all issues of the past decade and into the next millennium. During the passing of the torch, everyone sang "Keep on Moving Forward." This was a very emotional scene which brought many to tears. The ceremony left me with a sense of joy and hope for the world.

The next day, the NGO began outside of Northeast Beijing in Huairou County.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Approximately 30,000 people from 180 countries participated. The first day, it rained and the global tent was filled with women trying to get program books, information and ponchos to help them stay dry. The small group of three women that I traveled with headed to the makeshift McDonald's for lunch. Yes, they did have a McDonald's. Some groups actually protested the presence of the fast food chain.

I wanted to participate in the NGO forum because of the lack of discussion of lesbian issues that had not been brought into the mainstream of the Platform of Action. The Platform included those actions that governments should take to eliminate poverty, violence against women, reproductive rights, health and many other issues. What was not included in the Platform of Action was sexual orientation. Sexuality, as it related to lesbianism and discrimination, was kept to a minimum. Representatives from South Africa were the most outspoken regarding this issue. The country has sexual orientation in their national constitution.

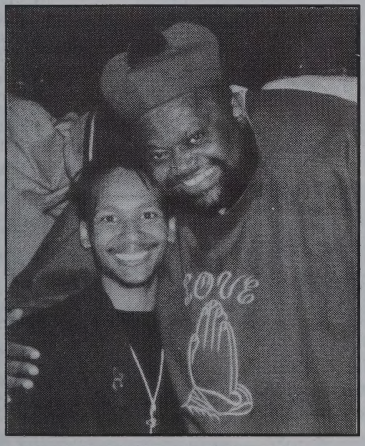
The final most remarkable experience I had going to China was the fact that all my life, I knew that people of color were the largest group in the world. That fact became very clear when I went to the NGO forum. I noticed that the majority of the women looked like me. This gave me some hope as I aspire to empower my sisters in the U.S.

I learned a great deal about myself during my travel to China. I met a woman who saved for five years to attend the conference. She sold straw baskets that she made. Here I thought that working the last few months to secure my way was a feat.

My journey was a spiritual one. It began months, years and decades before I consciously realized that I would be traveling to China. I have always wanted to travel to China. I feel spiritually connected to China, as I do Africa. This journey proved to be the beginning of many trips I will take outside the U.S. I use such journeys to discover and understand my blackness, lesbianism and my feminism. During my travels, I am able to explore want it is like to struggle in a movement where black women are still politically and economically invisible.

Wanda Alston is an activist from the D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays, and N.O.W.

Where do you worship & why?



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON SINGLETON

Tony Daniels with Unity Founder, Bishop Carl Bean.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church is where I worship. This church is the one place that I've found that welcomes me as I am; a Black Gay Man, activist, writer, performer, living with AIDS. We embrace people from all walks of life, regardless of sexual orientation, race, sex, creed, or gender. The church's motto is "God is Love and Love is for Everyone." We make that clear every Sunday. I am an officer of the church (Deacon in Training), this affords me a lot of contact with the congregation. I know first hand the good we are doing in the name of the Lord God who is in each and everyone of us. The emphasis is placed on spirituality as opposed to the literal interpretation of written scriptures.

Tony Daniels, 1995

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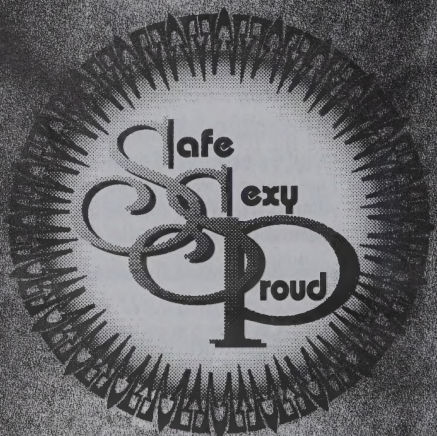

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Project Open Hand: Meals for Life

Project Open Hand is a non-profit organization which provides two freshly prepared meals a day, seven days a week to people who are living with AIDS in Atlanta. There is no charge to the recipients for the meals. Project Open Hand currently delivers to around 500 clients (1000 meals) per day. Approximately fifty new clients are added each month.

Project Open Hand works with a nutritionist to plan appropriate diets for people living with AIDS and HIV-related illnesses. The Project attempts to meet the varied needs of all of its clients by serving, in addition to regular meals, vegetarian, bland, no dairy, no salt, no pork, no red meat, no fish, soft meals, diabetic, and liquid meals.

Nutrition is one of the most important aspects of health care for a person with AIDS. The progression of HIV infection can be accelerated or intensified by nutritional deficiencies. It is imperative that people with AIDS have proper nutrition in order to try to maintain a stronger immune system. A large number of these people have neither the strength nor the energy to shop for ingredients or to prepare the meals. Frequently, people are devastated financially by the disease, and they do not have the resources to obtain nutritious food.

Project Open Hand pioneered a system of delivering meals cold, at close to freezing temperatures. Many meal delivery services deliver meals hot, requiring the food to be kept in warmers for long periods. Keeping the food warm can increase the risk of bacterial growth—an extreme hazard for immune-suppressed individuals. The Project serves meals in special packaging so that clients may use microwaves to heat the meals. Project Open Hand provides donated microwaves to clients who cannot obtain their own.

Project Open Hand began in 1988 with only fourteen clients, operating out of the kitchen of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. The Project has now served around two million meals. Project Open Hand relies heavily on volunteers for all aspects of its operation. Volunteers prepare, pack, and deliver meals to clients, work in the office, and assist in fundraisers and other community events.

In 1991, Project Open Hand moved to its current operating site at the old Bass High School in Little Five Points. The Project shares the kitchen there with the staff of Mary Lin Elementary School, which is using the building until renovations are completed on their own building. Project Open Hand is actively negotiating for a new facility for its operations.

Project Open Hand's annual $2.5 million operating expenses are funded through grants, private donations, fundraising events, and corporate giving.

Atlanta is a city which traditionally reaches out to its citizens who are in need and embraces their diversity. Project Open Hand continues to rediscover the "heart" of Atlanta and its people in the outpouring of help from its volunteers and supporters.

Project Open Hand is in need of volunteers in all areas of its operations, day and evening. Anyone interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities may call (404) 525-4620.

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In Georgia there were over 6,000 reported cases of AIDS in the African-American Community, 67% of which are Homosexual/Bi-Sexual Men.

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Black Nations/Queer Nations?
MIX 95: Film/Video Festival

MIX 95: Ninth New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film/Video Festival—the largest avant garde film festival in the world and oldest queer festival in New York City—is bringing more than 200 queer experimental films, videos, and cybermedia from around the world to three venues in New York.

The festival will feature the long-awaited feature film debut by Thomas Allen Harris, "Vintage * Families of Value," an experimental documentary about black gay siblings. The Festival will close with the World Premiere of "Black Nations/ Queer Nations?" an experimental documentary directed by Shari Frilot about the historic conference by the same name which addressed lesbian and gay sexualities in the African Diaspora. MIX 95 will also feature "Jungli Boogie," a queer and South Asian groovin' production.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LYLE ASTON HARRIS

Isaac Julien and Kabena Mercer at "Black Nations/Queer Nations?"

Other festival highlights include CYBERTOPIA: Mapping Queer Spaces, an installation of interactive media works and queer digital media.

Free Speech TV (Nov. 4-17) four hours of the best of MIX 95 in a cable access program which will be broadcast daily in more than 50 cities across America, and and MIX BRASIL: 3rd Festival das Manifestacoes da Sexualidade, the only traveling lesbian and gay festival in South America. With the support of MTV Brasil, the Banco Nacional in Sao Paulo and the Sao Paulo state.

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Indecent Proposal

A Twist on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace.

By Rosalind Christine Lloyd

Sexual harassment in the workplace has been a popular topic in the media because it plays almost like a soap opera in that it reeks of scandal and controversy. It is an important topic as current events uniquely chronicles the ever-slowly changing role of women in the workplace. One only has to examine the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings and Senator Packwood case as points of reference to this fact. However, sexual harassment of and in the Gay and Lesbian community is a subject that lies deep in the heart of America's crowded closet. As our ranks become more visible, it was only a matter of time vefore we began to witness an increase in negative sociological issues that plague the heterosexual community beginning to infiltrate the homosexual community. For example, racism and sexism are alive and well in the Gay and Lesbian community, even in these so-called progressive "Gay Nineties."

We have been affected by sexual harassment, by and large, by

Author Rosalind Christine Lloyd

individuals that somehow consider themselves members of the heterosexual community. I know this to be true on a personal note as I have experienced this form of harassment first-hand. My twelve lesbian years did not prepare me for what I encountered and the experience managed to leave a lasting impression with serious scars that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

It was a complex situation crossing the lines of gender, sexual and racial politics all at once. For several years I worked for a prominent and very successful organization where I was "out" on the job. Although I didn't wear my sexual identity on my sleeve, my orientation was a well-known fact among my colleagues and I was accepted as a lesbian without issue.

When a highly qualified, well-connected African-American woman came to head our office as Director, I was empowered to know that the organization had the decency, initiative, and foresight to promote a sister as a Director to the Board of Trustees where women and African Americans were typically rare. It was a progressive step for the administration. Denise was Ivy league educated, came from a near wealthy family, she married into a wealthy, near prestigious family, boasted an impressive background, spoke French like only a dignified French woman could and had the chic-est fashion sense known to woman-kind. This sister was eager for any challenge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Denise and I developed an excellent working relationship as Director and assistant, mentor and protégé, and friends. Our association was driven by pride and mutual respect. To be on her team motivated me—it was my number one objective to ensure that our office produce high quality product and to reinforce the company's commitment to hiring talented African-Americans, Women and Gays and Lesbians into higher positions of authority. I would no longer allow the infamous glass ceiling to influence my desire to elevate. She inspired me to further my education, to reach higher than I thought possible, constantly reminding me of how bright and talented I am. With her support and encouragement, I became an important player in the scheme of things as they pertained to our office. My involvement in critical projects, presentations, and my participation in international conferences will always remain as important experiences I will never forget; Denise made it possible.

At first, I considered her overt interest in me as mere curiosity, which we all know will happen at times when certain heterosexual women learn that certain women are lesbians. Suddenly the wind shifts, the tides change, things just aren't the same anymore. You either become the receptacle of all her feminine desire or you become the gay representative of information on all things remotely related to Gay and Lesbian issues. This is not the most desirable position to be in.

It started out with the endless compliments and verbal adorations. Expensive dinners at pricey, upscale restaurants were common, where we ate quite well and the company paid for every bit of it. Gifts of foreign chocolates, antique jewelry of questionable value, French perfume, random pieces of designer clothing, unlimited use of her credit card for no apparent reason other that the fact that she was purely being nice to me. All of this resulted into a dangerous, unrequited obsession. An objective observer would initially view our tightness as a mentor-protégé relationship. However, if one were to take a closer look and peel off the layers of ambiguity and professional protocol, one could easily see a smoldering yet subtley restrained innuendo.

The innuendo soon escalated to advances; Denise finding excuses to touch my face, reasons to run her fingers along my hair, giving me unsolicited back rubs while telling me how beautiful she thinks I am. The "come with me to the ladies room," conversations about her husband and/or my lover were curious. The business trip to the Far East where she convinced me that it was safer we share a room with double beds, only to discover once we arrived that a king-sized bed was to be our shared sleeping accommodations!

I was in denial over what was happening. My lover at the time, insisted that something was going on and that I was deliberately overlooking it. I believed that my lover was simply being overprotective and possessive, a textbook case of co-dependency. Obviously at great risk, our relationship suffered irreparable damage from the ordeal.

One evening, Denise and I worked in the office until about 11:00 PM. We ordered dinner in and labored until we were brain-fatigued. She asked me if she could stay the night at my place; her apartment in the city was being occupied by friends of her family and she didn't feel like making the long trek upstate to her other home. I was fine with this, although I couldn't understand why a woman with two homes would want to sleep in my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

cramped studio apartment in one of the city's marginal neighborhoods. But, we were involved in an important project and I lived close to the office. It was terribly convenient.

After my shower, she was already in my bed. As I stood nearby setting the alarm clock, she asked me how could I wear such a tight t-shirt to bed. It was simply a sleeveless tee, typical sleep wear. Ignoring the comment, I climbed into bed next to her and lay silent for a few moments. After about ten minutes of silence, she asked me,

"When are we going to do it?"

It was so matter of fact, almost like it had been on the tip of her tongue all night.

I asked her to repeat what she had said because I was caught completely off guard, shocked and unprepared.

She said it again, "You heard me, when are we going to do it?"

I responded, "What about my lover and your husband?"

Denise whispered it harshly, "They don't have to know."

"But aren't you my boss and I'm your employee?" I had to confirm this fact with her.

"So? No one has to know, except you and me."

The reality shattered me. To say I was devastated would be a gross understatement simply because of what she initially represented to me. There it was, in my face, in my bed. I turned my back on her. The tension in that room was unbearable.

Everything changed. She was a woman not accustomed to the word "no" and her anger and feelings of rejection would reverberate throughout the duration of our acquaintance.

There was a drastic decrease in our close interaction. Although we tried to maintain a civility toward each other, now there was a great deal of stress between us.

On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent.... There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

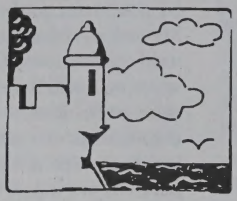
On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women validated my naiveté.

Confused, disappointed, slightly flattered, I was feeling so many different conflicting things, but ultimately I felt manipulated and deceived.

She was a different person. My participation in conferences and projects were reduced. My requests for time off were frequently denied. My performance review was postponed indefinitely and she made it clear that a pay raise was not in my future. My work was being closely monitored and scrutinized to the point where we would have loud arguments in the office, even in front of co-workers. On reflection, the innocent back massages were suddenly no longer innocent anymore. There was new meaning in every touch, every whisper. The dinner conversations that drifted to my explanations of how I became the way I am and how I gain pleasure from making love with women only validated my denial and ignorance to the truth. Finally after one bitter disagreement I decided it was impossible for she and I to peacefully coexist together. I resigned from the best job I ever had.

For me, issues of empowerment among and for the African-American, Women, and Gay & Lesbian communities are essentially important being that I am a critical part of each of these groups. Within these groups, the African-American lesbian is at the bottom of each list, the least important, the most discriminated against and largely the most ignored. Due to this bitter piece of reality, I approach everyday life with these three common denominators in mind, and for these reasons I could not consciously persecute the already persecuted. The wide range of repercussions would be too deep. Although this harassment experience exploited everything that I am and represent, I had to take it to another level, of how the closet (someone else's) still destroyed my career and an important part of my life.

¡Somos únicos, visítenos y compruébenlo!



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Litany for Survival—

The Life &Work of Audre Lorde

Michelle Parkerson, filmmaker, on her involvement in this ground breaking work.

Producer/Director of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*, Ada Gay-Griffin first met Lorde in 1978 while studying black feminist literature and theory at Hampshire College. Griffin has helped introduce the work of outstanding filmmakers of color to audiences in the U.S. Griffin has also spoken and written on media literacy and empowerment. *A Litany for Survival* is her first film, completed after 10 years of struggle to release this first film to link black, gay and women's rights.

Griffin invited Director **Michelle Parkerson**, a writer and independent filmmaker from Washington, D.C. to work on *Litany* eight years ago. She has served on the faculties of Temple University, the University of Delaware, Howard University and Northwestern University. In 1992, she received a Rockefeller Foundation Film/Video Fellowship. As a member of the American Film Institute's Directing Workshop for Women (8th Cycle), she wrote and directed "Odds and Ends," a black amazon science fiction story.

A Litany for Survival is an epic portrait of the eloquent, award-winning black lesbian poet, whose writing articulated some of the most important social and political visions of this century. Lorde, a controversial and celebrated African-American writer, cultural theorist and activist, embodied the connections among three dynamic social movements: the Civil Rights movement, the women's movement, and the struggle for lesbian and gay rights. From Lorde's childhood in New York City's Harlem to her vibrant poetry and prose, from her battle against breast cancer to her forceful workshops and speeches, this powerful film explores her remarkable life.

Emory University's Office of Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Life and ZAMI (Atlanta's group for African-American lesbians), in conjunction with the Southeastern Arts, Media, and Education Project will present the Atlanta premiere of *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lord* November 18 at 4 and 8 PM in Harland Cinema (located in the Dobbs University Center on Emory's Campus). Griffin and Parkerson will host a discussion/question and answer session following the viewing. This event is open to the public. Students and seniors will be

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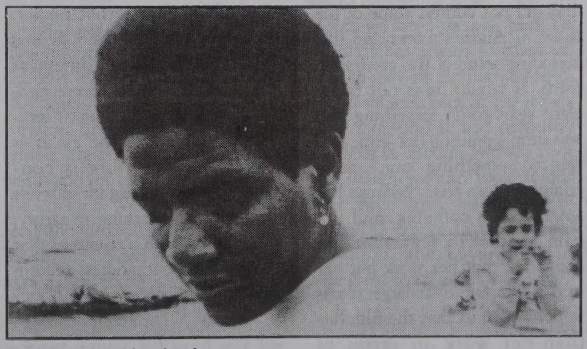


Audre Lord and her daughter.

admitted for $5, others for $10, payable at the door only.

Venus magazine profiled Parkerson to solicit her views on a myriad of concerns as a film executive, from challenges as a black gay woman to the impact of Lorde's works on her endeavors.

Venus Magazine: How did the vision for the film take place, and how did you go about facilitating that vision?

Michelle Parkerson: Basically my role in the project was to facilitate Ada's (Gay-Griffin, producer/director of the film) vision.

What this meant was the project was a collaborative effort on behalf of Ada, Audre Lorde, and myself. Audre was heavily involved in commenting on the footage, and the people we were to interview, giving us information for contacts and biography, as well as people to discuss and critique her work. It was firstly Ada's work and I was there, more or less, as a facilitator. Simply making sure the work makes it to the screen; I was the generator of the vision.

We wanted to present a film with Black Lesbians as the primary group or focus, to act as a document of Audre's present, not her past. Not a memorial. It would have been much easier to do something more celebratory that did not address some of the issues of Audre's works and life, including some of the contradictions. It would have not taken eight years to do something that was simply praising her work. We wanted something much more complex than that, because her work was so complex, and the film needed to represent the challenge that her work put out in the community-at-large. It was important to us that the film further her work in terms of

PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Michelle Parkerson, Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

awareness, as well as involve people in work with women with cancer, being a survivor of cancer, and how one does that. We needed to also look at Audre's role in the international movement of people of color, and how we can all be a part of that. We were concerned with much more than making a film that was entertaining on a cinematic level. This film had work to do, to act as a catalyst to motivate people to do the necessary work wherever they find themselves.

We also had an eye towards a group of people who may not know, or even care, who Audre Lorde is, or what her work reflects. We also had the task of drawing them in and keeping them interested, and import Audre's work internationally. Import in terms of the Gay and Lesbian community, import as far as feminism is concerned, import as far as feminist literature is concerned, and as far as American literature is concerned. There were a lot of levels that we were working to satisfy, to come up with a structure that would reach out, address, inform and touch people.

Venus: What central message do you have for young, black, gay/lesbian filmmakers attempting to mobilize their community?

Parkerson: The hope is that there exists now generations of Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers who are out and have been impacted by the works of those who have paved the way; Marlon Riggs, Isaac Julien, Slyvia Rue, Joycelyn Taylor, Cheryl Dunae, Brent Hill, John Suggs, and Jamika Aljalan just to name a few. There are also their film and video works that one can study and see how to take an approach towards media and their sexuality as well as their race. In the mid 80's there arose a very visible group of sisters who were out with the material they were producing, letting the fact that they were Black Lesbians inform and shape the work as well. It was not peripheral to the material, it was not just about them.

For black people to have access to the media, still remains rare for Black people, in terms of controlling and shaping the images and utilizing the technology, it remains even rarer for Black women and especially Black Lesbian women. Black Gay and Lesbian film and video makers are showing the reality of how we love and struggle, have tensions, and make great achievements and how the translation comes across on the screen for brothers and sisters. It is very important that Black Gay and Lesbian filmmakers are making Black Gay and Lesbian films.

Venus: In your opinion, why have our society's mature black lesbians and gay men chosen to remain invisible when they are needed as positive role models?

Parkerson: I think its where you are . It is a possibility that it's geographic. In Washington

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

(D.C.) the Black Gay and Lesbian presence here has certainly been very viable and visible in city and municipal politics. We don't sit still for discrimination in this city. We have a level of protection because of that visibility; housing discrimination, employment discrimination, and social injustice get front page coverage, because we speak up and out against it.

It is phenomenal what is happening in the south and Atlanta. In the city you have the anonymity or the numbers of people to join in the community, and that is not the case in rural areas. The larger cities have larger gay and lesbian communities; New York, San Francisco, Chicago, L.A., etc., as well as larger Black Gay and Lesbian communities. I think there is a certain conservatism that is pervasive the further south you get, almost as if the underlying consciousness is "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." I say that coming from a small southern town myself (Washington D.C.). We happen to have the focus of the nation in the sense of the world's attention here because of the government. Outside of the federal city, it is a small southern town, but there is a level of cosmopolitanism, and bodasciousness, a lack of not caring, which is a southern thing, about what people think and making it anyway. A large piece of southerner's care and comfort level in the community seems to be based upon other people's perception of us. Atlanta is coming, but there still exists this conservative atmosphere, and I'm wondering who that's for. Here (D.C.) and in Baltimore, and its a small southern town too, people have let it go. Baltimore may not be as cosmopolitan but it is progressive. That same vibration is present in Atlanta and growing. It happens whenever we acknowledge each other, when we start doing thing outside of the bars. Doing things that are empowering. Forming consciousness raising groups, things like Lesbians over 30-something, social and political action groups. Those kinds of things further our presence and empower each one of us to look into each other eyes. We can then look at things differently and say "Yeah, this is O.K.," "She's living fine, I'm doing O.K.," "How can I pass this on." These acts are very affirming. Venus Magazine is a part of that, it's a part of the affirmation and the rush towards progression and visibility. Thank god! you are down here.

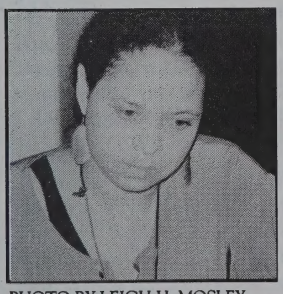


PHOTO BY LEIGH H. MOSLEY.

Ada Gay Griffin, Producer/ Director of "A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde," a Third World Newsreel Production.

The Lady in the Jewel Box—a film produced in 1987 was about the only woman to perform with the world famous Jewel Box Review, which was a troupe of female impersonators. The film was made for more reasons than the obvious. We wanted to preserve the history of the Jewel Box Theatre. It toured the Black theatre circuit and was the first integrated female impersonation show in the 50's and 60's. The show played across the country, to all sexual orientations, to black audiences that looked forward to seeing the show every year. The show had so much talent, there was no lip synching, they performed live, they had fabulous costumes, and the entertainers were beautiful. Their repertoire include the divas of the era; Dinah Washington, Lena Horne, and Billie Holiday, and they sang and danced to no end.

Mabel Hampton is another example of an old-school Black out Lesbian whose work was documented in the lesbian herstory archives. She has often been honored at national conferences by Black Gays and Lesbians.

There is a history of elders in our community that have struggled as we still struggle today. They dealt with tremendous pressures and invisibility. These examples tend to put into perspective your own personal ideas of how you're going to define your role as an African American and as Gay or Lesbian. It makes you that much more in tune to the realities of what you can and cannot do, and when it is appropriate to break barriers, and how one does that and survives. It brings it all together. It is important that we document the lives of our elders, its not all about the 20-something generation and what's happening now. There are people we need to look back on and that has always fortified us. Particularly as African people. When we look back at the legacy of people, and it will certainly fortify us as lesbians and gay people. When we can look at our own race and know James Baldwin, Audre Lorde, Mabel Hampton, and Bayard Rustin were great black gay Americans.

About Audre Lorde

February 18, 1934–November 17, 1992

Audre Lorde is internationally regarded as a significant contributor to the struggle for women's liberation and lesbian and gay rights. Her writing has been translated in seven foreign languages.

Born the youngest of three daughters and raised in a West Indian household in Harlem, Audre Lorde began reading and reciting poetry at a very young age. She often used poetry to communicate with others. When she could no longer find poems to express her feelings, she began writing her own poetry. Her first published poem appeared in *Seventeen* magazine while she was a student at Hunter High School. Audre Lorde later attended Hunter College in New York City where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1959. She regularly attended and read with the Harlem Writer's Guild, and cited Langston Hughes and John Henrick Clarke as early mentors. She received a masters degree in Library Science from Columbia University in 1961 and worked as a librarian at Mount Vernon Public Library until 1963. She was head librarian at Town School Library in New York City from 1966 to 1968.

In 1968, Audre Lorde became poet in residence at Tougaloo College in Mississippi, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and published her first volume of poetry, *The First Cities*. Lorde's third volume of poetry, *From a Land Where Other People Live*, published by Broadside Press (Detroit) in 1973, was nominated for a National Book Award. *Coal*, published in 1976 by W.W. Norton and Company, was the first of Lorde's books to be released by a major publisher. A compilation of her first two books, it brought her work to a broader readership. W.W. Norton published five of her six subsequent volumes of poetry, collections which chart the development of her complex poetic and personal vision.

Diagnosed with breast cancer in 1978, Lorde's writings about her illness were published in *The Cancer Journals* which won the American Library Association Gay Caucus Book of the Year Award for 1981. Other prose included a biographical novel, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (1982), *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1982), and *A Burst of Light* (1986) in which Lorde, again diagnosed with cancer, returned to prose to help heal herself and inspire others. Audre Lorde's final volume of poetry, *The Marvelous Arithmetics of Disease* (1993) was published posthumously.

Audre Lorde worked intensively with women of color in many different countries, was a founder of Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, a founding mother of Sisterhood in Support of Sisters in South Africa, and addressed two national marches: the 1983 20th Anniversary Commemorative March on Washington for Justice, Peace and Equality; and the First National March for Lesbian and Gay Liberation in 1979, also in Washington, D.C.

Audre Lorde was awarded the Walt Whitman Citation for Merit for poets and was named state poet of New York for 1991–1993. And she received honorary doctorate degrees from Oberlin College (1989) and Haverford College (1990). She retired to the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1987, continuing to work until her death in 1992.

Essex Charles Hemphill

April 16, 1957–November 4, 1995

Essex Charles Hemphill, poet, editor, was born in Chicago on April 16, 1957. He was raised in Washington, D.C. and as a youngster began perfecting the art of writing prolific, often controversial poetry about his life as a Black, gay man in America.

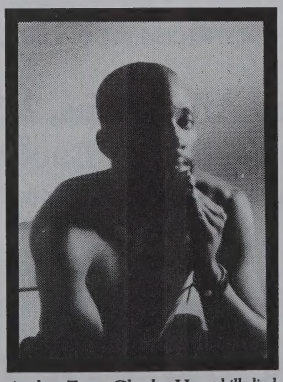
He founded **Nethula Journal of Contemporary Literature** in 1978. He ran the magazine several years before becoming more and more active as a performer. In 1983 he formed **Cinque**, a trio of performance artists.

Essex received Fellowship in Literature from the D.C. Commission for the Arts (1982, 1983, and 1988). He is the recipient of a 1985 Fellowship in Literature (Poetry) from the national Endowment of the Arts. And co-recipient of a 1986 and 1987 Painted Bride Arts Center New Works Residency.

His work has been published in **Black Scholar, Essence Magazine, Callaloo, Painted Bride Quarterly, Gargoyle, Outweek, Blackheart, Obsidian, New York Native, James White Review, Hometowns, I Hear A Symphony** and, still, several other North American publications.

Selections of his poetry are anthologized in **Artists Against Apartheid, The Poet Upstairs, In the Life, New Men, New Minds and Brother to Brother: New Writings by Black Gay Men**, which he also edited, earning him a Lambda Award.

His work in print includes three self-published chapbooks, **Diamonds was in the Kitty** (1982), **Plums** (1983), **Earth Life** (1985), and a book-length collection, **Conditions** (1986).



Author Essex Charles Hemphill died Nov. 4, 1995.

Mr. Hemphill's work is featured in the films **Lookin' for Langston, Tongues Untied** and **Black Is, Black Ain't** (director Marlon Riggs' last film..)

In 1992, his first book of poetry, **Ceremonies**, was published, earning him the National Library Association's New Authors in Poetry Award.

In 1993, he worked in Santa Monica, California, with the Getty Center for the History of Art and Humanities, Visiting Scholars Program. 1994 saw hime in Philadelphia, fulfilling the requirements of his Pugh Fellowship Award. It was in Philadelphia where he died of complications associated with AIDS on November 4, 1995. Mr. Hemphill will be funeralized and buried in Washington, D.C.

He is survived by his mother, Mantalene Clark Hemphill, three sisters and one brother, all younger. There are close friends and scores of admirers who will miss the dynamic element he brought to everyone's life through his words.

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In The Spirit; In The Life!

There is a Balm—

The Black Church Leadership Conference

By Craig Washington

The Second Annual Black Church National Education and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS was held on May 22-24, 1995, at the Howard University School of Divinity in Washington, D.C. Religious leaders, scholars and community workers from all over the country gathered to pray, plan and implement outreach and ministry efforts. The Conference was produced by The Balm in Gilead, Inc., a secular organization which provides education and technical support for African-American religious institutions engaged in HIV/AIDS education, services and advocacy. Founder Pernessa Seele enjoined the support of the nation's leading black spiritual dignitaries to ensure full participation. Within the context of this epidemic, the Black church must resume its historical role and relevance to the community that needs it now more than ever. This Conference was a groundbreaking step toward this process of reclamation.

This interdenominational summit served as both an educational forum addressing theological doctrine and practice and as a bonafide revival meeting replete with prayer, singing and shouting, inspiring its attendants to continue the struggle with renewed courage. The list of facilitators included such luminaries as Rev. Rainey Cheeks (Inner Light Unity Fellowship), Phil Wilson (AIDS Project Los Angeles) and Atlanta's own Byllye Avery (National Black Woman's Health Project) and Dr. Barbara King (Hillside). This diverse mix of pastors, gay activists and educators brought forth a wide range of vision and expertise.

The opening ceremony included an African libation, an HIV-focused invocation and greetings from Dorothy Height (National Council of Negro Woman) and Dorothy Triplett (Center for Disease Control). Following the commencement, a panel of PWAs shared their stories of adversity and triumph as long-term survivors of HIV and other challenges (incest, substance abuse, neglect). The second day opened with a responsive reading calling to "God of the gay and God of the straight...God of Us All...Grant that in this safe space the silence will be broken so that the healing of HIV and AIDS may begin."

The workshop plenary offered an impressive menu of topics such as "The Church Beyond Homophobia" and "The Sexual and Emotional Health of Black Women." The black theology workshop provided provocative

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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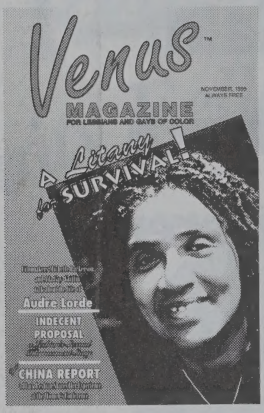

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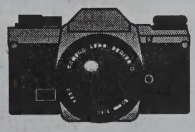

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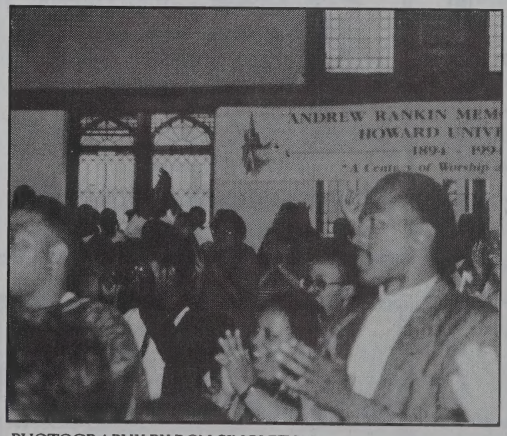
insights regarding the Church's stance on sin and acceptance. Rev. Kelly Douglas stated that we must examine the black community in a historical context in order to understand how the Church "sees" and interprets God. In his address about homophobia, Dr. West underscored the Church's responsibility to grapple honestly with the sexual lives of his congregants. "Underneath our dresses and our three-piece suits we are all funky creatures," Dr. West attested, Author Haki Madhubuti facilitated a workshop entitled "The Sexual Responsibility of Black Men" and neglected to mention gay and bisexual issues. When challenged by the attendants, Madhubuti claimed to have insufficient knowledge of the subject. One of the participants cautioned, "You need to learn."

The final day began with a rousing rendition of "There is A Balm in Gilead" and offered a series of skill-building tracks. I attended the "HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Training for Ministers" delivered by Rev. Terri Griffen-Price (H.E.A.L.) and Dr. Elias Farajaje-Jones (Howard Univ). Thank you God for Rv. Price, a passionate speaker who got happy she advised us how to approach religious leaders. She advised us to challenge intolerant pastors and any theologies bereft of compassion. Dr. Farajaje-Jones addressed "erotophobia" (fear of the erotic and its power) and "gynophobia" (fear and hatred of women) as processes that fuel hostility towards gays and lesbians. The workshop offered methods of developing curricula to train leaders to respond to HIV/AIDS with compassion and competency.

I was deeply moved by the level of commitment among those in attendance. It was so refreshing to witness such exuberance despite the barriers which often thwart our work. I returned from this meeting feeling completely recharged, my wavering faith restored. I am happy to announce that several Atlantan spiritual leaders and activists are collaborating to organize a Week of Prayer during which churches and mosques would devote their energies to address HIV/AIDS in their congregations and community. Like the Harlem-based original event, the Week of Prayer can be celebrated through a gospel concert, ministry, bereavement service, revival, seminar or any activity motivated by a healing spirit. The Week of Prayer is tentatively scheduled for the first week of March 1996. Brothers and sisters in the life (closeted or not) need to take active roles in this event and the planning process has already begun. For more information,



PHOTOGRAPHY BY RON SINGLETON

The Worship Service at the Second Annual Black Church National Educational and Leadership Training Conference on HIV/AIDS held May 22–24 at Howard University. (Top) New York's Marjorie Hill joins in, at right.

Redefining Our Faith

By Rev. S.F. Ma-Hee

The year is 1995 and African-American people who are "In The Life" are reclaiming an intricately heretical aspect of their culture— black church. After having collars and Bibles used to invalidate and oppress us, we can now use them as a source of freedom and liberation. We are finally moving toward the acceptance that God is love, and love is for everyone, regardless of race, creed, physical or financial ability, or sexual orientation.

There has never been any doubt about our existence or contribution to the black church, and we have done so and probably will continue to do so despite being denied the liberty to do so. The Unity Fellowship Church movement and Bishop Carl Bean have empowered those who have been robbed and stripped of family and community via the church.

Gail Booker, Tony Daniels, Michael-Tone Covington, Tamara Irons, and Reverend S.F. Ma-Hee (left to right), Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship members at the National Unity Convocation in Los Angeles.

No longer do we have to live in fear of going to hell for loving another human being. Freedom is here. No longer do we have to put aside being African-American to worship as les/bi/gay/trans people. For we now have a worship institution of our very own.

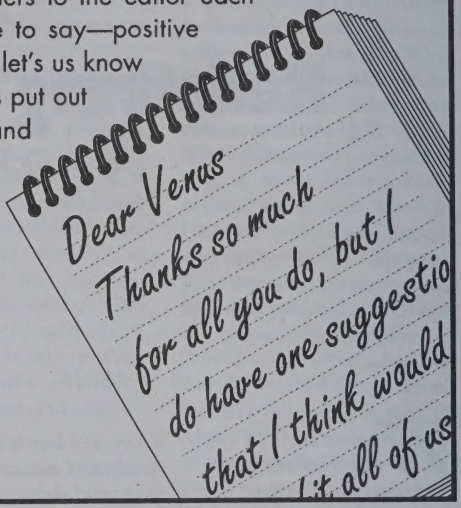
It's 1995, and Unity Fellowship Church is carrying its message of liberation theology to black gay people through its nine churches, in the United States.

It's 1995, and we now serve proudly and openly in church offices that we have always held.

It's 1995, and our people finally at last have the choice. Somebody, anybody say Amen.

We Love Hearing From You

Our favorite job is opening the letters to the editor each month. No matter what you have to say—positive feedback or constructive criticism, it let's us know you're out there and care to help us put out the best publication for lesbians and gay men of color.



Keep Writing Those Letters

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PROFILE OF A MAN

Name:..... Linus Lynell

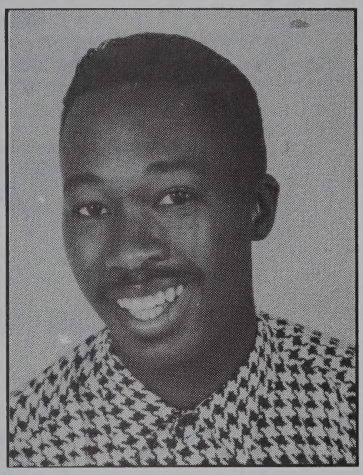
Age:..... 31

Status:..... Very single

Career:..... Non-profit administrator; Performing artist

Hometown:.. Flint, Michigan

Latest Book:. "Makes Me Wanna Holler: A Young Black Man in America" by Nathan McCall



Linus is currently living in Dallas, Texas, and loves his work as Associate Coordinator for The Men's Gathering, a social support group for African-American men. He is also anspiring writer and will soon contribute articles about the black gay male experience in Dallas.

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Center Stage AT LAST!

Oleta Adams performs for HRCF

Songstress/Diva Oleta Adams.

Over 1,500 people turned out at the Fabulous Fox Theatre in downtown Detroit for the Human Rights Campaign Fund's Michigan Dinner.

The black-tie event entitled "Center Stage at Last" could have just as easily been named "One Enchanted Evening."

The top two floors were reserved for a pre-event, the annual Women's Ice Breaker (very appropriately named). The third level hosted Washington V.I.P.'s and other dignitaries including Detroit's mayor, Dennis Archer.

Socialite June Washington, the women's outreach chair and African-American lesbian/Diva, is credited for the largest black gay and lesbian turnout at an HRCF event ever. (At $150–$300 per plate, that's some pretty fierce networking!)

Cheryl Troup, also a lesbian of color, served as Primary Event co-chair. Cheryl feels that the campaign's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, is not only sincere by very serious about changing the stoic white male image traditionally associated with its annual events.

The evening began with a broadway style strolling dinner. When the lights finally dimmed, we found our seats and were dazzled by comedian Georgia Ragsdale. We roared with laughter as she talked about what it's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

Commedienne Georgia Ragsdale.

like to visit a gay male bar. "BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! You can feel the music pounding six blocks away!"

Ragsdale might be the first out lesbian to hit network television with her own show, a sitcom series set to air this fall on ABC.

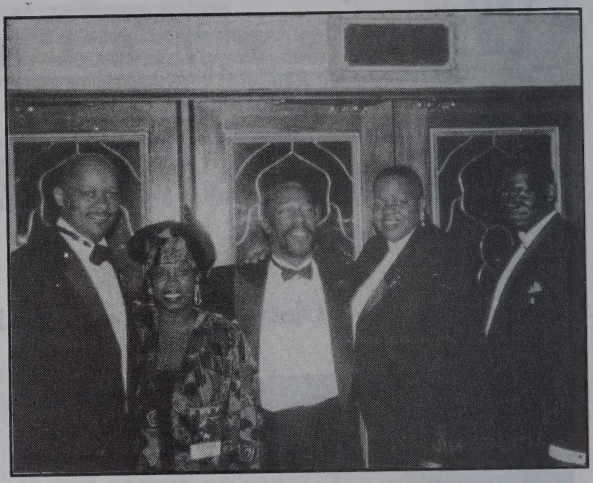
Her co-host, actor Dan Butler, of "Roseanne," "Picket Fences," and "X-Files" to name a few was equally entertaining; "I'm not a straight guy but I play one on T.V."

The highlight of the evening was a sizzling performance by two-time Grammy nominee Oleta Adams. She swooned us with all our favorites, including "Circle of One," "Get Here," "Hold Me for Awhile," and "Window of Hope."

Oleta says she identifies with singers like Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway. "You can hear the purity of sound and emotion, but also the discipline, technique and sophistication. That's what my music is all about. Getting back to the part that's been left out since this synthetic, sterile, non-feeling sound has come in. Everyone wants to classify me, put me in a category. This is highly emotional music, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's time to get back to romance."

Calm down girls!! This diva is happily married to drummer John Cushon. Oleta says, "I made him wait twelve years! A girl's got to be sure!" Look for her new CD, entitled "Moving On," to be released in late November.

As the applause faded the scene changed to a serious "house party" in the Grand Lobby, complete with dancing, exotic cocktails and hot music by D.J. Serend 'N' Effect Tyler.



Activist/Diva June Washington (2nd from Left) and Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran (2nd from right) pose with members of Detroit's Billionaire's Boy Club in the Grand Lobby.

Fabulous Belinda Jefferies of HRCF's Women's Committee at Detroit's Fox Theatre. Marketing Director for a family-owned business, Belinda was also director of sales for the annual program booklet.

Hats off to HRCF Detroit! Who says a bunch of people in formal wear can't have fun?!

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

SisterHelp Community Fund, along with Hospitality Atlanta, Sisters of 30 Something Special and Dyfferent Gyrl Productions, is asking for donations to assist Cindi Joshua, a friend and sister to our community. Ms. Joshua is in need of a kidney transplant, and financial contributions, medical referrals, information and/or suggestions are welcome. Please call 707-6866 with any help.

The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute presents the **8th Annual Creating Change Conference for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Movement!** To be held **November 10–12, 1995** at the Westin Hotel Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan. Featured guests include **Elias Farajaje-Jones** (a Spanish speaking, afrikan, native-american and an anarchist guerilla, theologian/AIDS terorrist/writer/cultural critic/performance artist/ritual technician) and **Urvashi Vaid** (a community organizer and attorney, past NGLTF executive director and author of Virtual Equality.)

On October 19, Deputy Assistant to President Clinton, Marshe Scott, wrote Elizabeth Birch, Executive Director of the Humanr Rights Campaign Fund: "I am pleased to let you know that on Friday, Oct. 20, 1995, the **President will formally endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.** As the Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, I know that you and your organization have worked tirelessly to promote passage of this important legislation. The leadership role taken by the Human Rights Campaign to rally public support for this issue has culminated in the bi-partisan endorsements from over 157 members of Congress. The President is delighted to join with you and our many friends in Congress who endorse and support this important civil rights legislation."

Neighborhood Playhouse will hold auditions for "To Kill a Mockingbird" with cold readings at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday November 12th and Monday, November 13th. Needed are 1 African-American male (18–50) and 1 African-American female (20–50). No appointment necessary. Call 404/373-3904 for more information.

AID Atlanta now offers a **Support Group for African-American Men Living with HIV/AIDS.** Group meets every Tuesday from 7–9 p.m. at AID Atlanta offices (1438 W. Peachtree St., NW, Ste 100.) Call 404-885-6800, ext. 231 for more information.

Black Gay Pride Atlanta 1996. The First Community-Wide meeting for Atlanta's Black Gay Pride Celebration will be held at Karats Niteclub, 511 Peachtree Street, downtown Atlanta (across from Crawford Long. The meeting will begin promptly at 7 p.m. The agenda will include a review of Pride '95, new ideas for '96 and discussion about Board and Steering Committee selections. All are welcome! Let's make Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96 a world-class event!

Artists in all disciplines (except film) are being sought for the **Fourth Annual Atlanta Gay and Lesbian Film Festival (AGALAF).** The festival willbe held in Decatur **April 11–14, 1996.** Deadline for submissions is Nov. 15 ($10 fee) and Dec. 15 ($15 fee). For entry forms, call 404/874-8710 or write AGALAF, P.O. Box 55475, Atlanta, GA 30308.

Audre Lorde Scholarship Fund was announced by Zami for African-American lesbians in Atlanta. This scholarship will be awarded to an African-American lesbian student who best embodies the spirit of Audre Lorde. All financial contributions are tax-deductible and may be sent to Zami at P.O. Box 2502, Decatur, GA 30031.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 39

World AIDS Day

December 1, 1995

On World AIDS Day, an international event held on December 1 each year to bring awareness to the pandemic, will be commemorated by a number of activities hosted by AID Atlanta. The World AIDS Day 1995 theme, "Shared Rights, Shared Responsibilities," highlights the importance of equality and solidarity in the global response to AIDS.

The Atlanta Hawks, who will play the Mavericks on December 1, will host "Time Out for Awareness," and donate a portion of their proceeds to a number of local AIDS charities. Call (404) 827-DUNK for more information. Also during the day, houses of worship and individuals are asked to ring a bell fifteen times, once for each year of the epidemic, at 1:50 p.m. AID Atlanta is asking people to participate in this event by purchasing a handmade, limited edition, silver plated bell at the benefit art gallery Koolhipfunkystuff, located at 1030 Monroe Drive. Bells can also be purchased by calling the gallery at (404) 607-1095, and all proceeds will benefit AID Atlanta.

The opportunity to educate people about HIV/AIDS will be a priority for AID Atlanta on World AIDS Day, and a number of educational events are scheduled. AID Atlanta youth peer educators will be at North Atlanta High School doing presentations "Teen to Teen" in health education classes, and at the Centers for Disease Control participating in panel discussions on issues relating to teens and HIV. These peer educators will also present to the Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, and at St. Luke's Episcopal Church High School on Sunday, December 3.

WAOS Radio, a Spanish speaking station located at 1600 AM will air the documentary, "AIDS Does Not Discriminate" on December 1, after which listeners will have the opportunity to speak with bilingual staff persons at the Georgia AIDS Information Line (800) 551-2728, a state service available in conjunction with AID Atlanta. There will also be a mobilization of AID Atlanta's Hispanic Outreach Workers, who will visit Hispanic community groups, grocery stores, and beauty parlors to provide visitors with HIV/AIDS information.

AID Atlanta's African-American Outreach team will distribute red ribbons and flyers at key MARTA stations, and will also assist the Atlanta University Center in their World AIDS Day program at Spelman's Living and Learning Center. The Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual outreach volunteers will conduct a "Bar Blitz," distributing safer sex kits and promoting a "Get Tested" message by providing information on HIV testing locations.

The AID Atlanta Speaker's Bureau will experience their busiest day of the year, with engagements booked at schools, work places, churches and community groups, with additional requests still being made. To schedule a speaker, please contact Chris Parsons (404) 885-6800, ext. 231. AID Atlanta volunteers are also staffing booths at a number of health fairs across the city.

The 411

News Around Atlanta and the Nation!

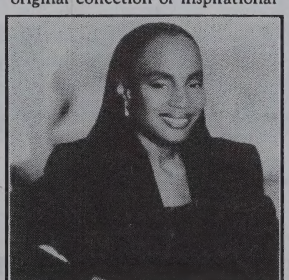
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 37

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities **November 22–26.** Featured activi-

ties include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't;" workshops on "Gay Life in Africa" and "A Gathering of Old Queens;" and a closing dinner dance.

The first meeting for the **Black Church Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS Planning Commission was held on Oct. 21** at Believe and Receive Ministry. This Commission will include a diverse mix of African-American clergy, community workers and volunteers who will collaborate to establish a Week of Prayer in March 1996 for African-American churches in Atlanta. The goal of this event is to enjoin the faith community, mass media and gospel radio stations to broaden HIV awareness, education and services for our people. Based on the Harlem Week of Prayer in New York (established in 1988), the Week of Prayer is a coordinated week of activities in which participants can demonstrate their commitment in various ways (gospel concert, food drive, HIV seminar, bereavement service). The Planning Committee will actually determine how the Week of Prayer will be observed in Atlanta. This is an historic opportunity to develop an HIV/AIDS awareness event which the African-American community can embrace as its own. We would like you to be a part of the planning process. The institute for Minority AIDS Prevention Studies (I-MAPS) will provide technical assistance for the Atlanta replication of the Week of Prayer. For more information please call Craig Washington at (404) 885-6800 X277 or Pastor Julia Robinson at (404) 286-9309.

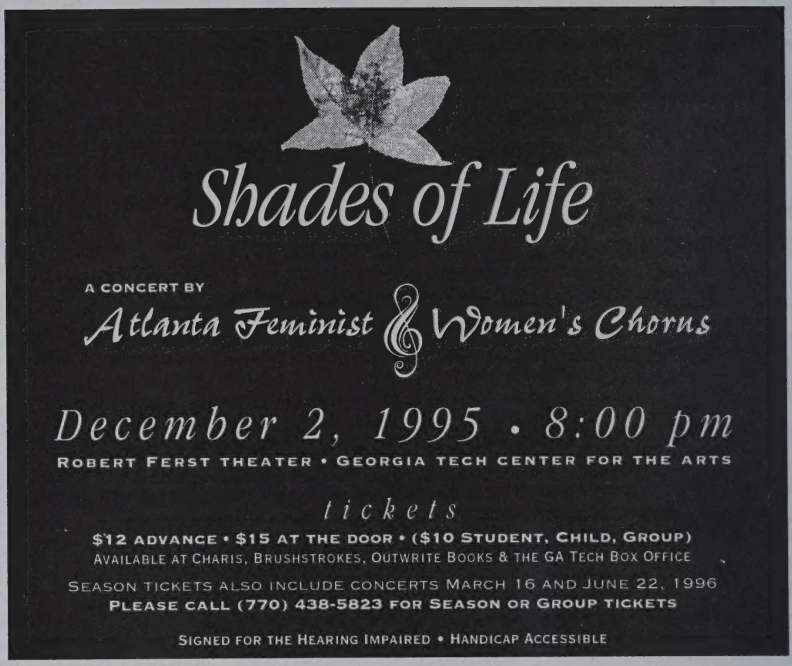
Susan L. Taylor, editor-in-chief of Essence will be in Atlanta Nov. 17-18, promoting her new book, "Lessons in Living." Book signings will be held at Visions 3000, Clarkston, Ga., Nov. 17 at 6:30 p.m.; Chapter 11, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m.; and Truth Bookstore, Atlanta, Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m. "Lessons in Living(Anchor Books, Hardcover; Nov. 7, 1995; $19.95), is an entirely original collection of inspirational



writing in which the celebrated provides insight into the universal quest for faith and spiritually that inevitably occurs as a result of life's challenges. It explores issues that are of interest to all people: self-empowerment, love, self-worth, faith and commitment, and the journey of life. For more information call Truth Bookstore at 404/523-3240.

Elizabeth Glaser, co-founder of the Pediatric AIDS Foundation, **was the recipient of a Special Inspiration Award presented by The Noel Foundation/The United Nations Development Fund for Women** in October at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, Calif. The award was presented as part of the Noel Foundation/UNIFEM Awards Ceremony, "A Celebration of Inspiration and Commitment" that honored six outstanding women from around the world, in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. Glaser died of complications from AIDS on Dec. 3, 1994. The only foundation of its kind in the US, the Pediatric AIDS Foundation identifies, funds and conducts basic research into the prevention and treatment of HIV infection, as well as providing public education and information about the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS among women and children. For more information contact Victoria Thomas, Communications Manager, Pediatric AIDS Foundation, (310) 395-9051.

The Kick Publishing Co has successfully published its ambitious new publication, entitled KICK! Magazine for one full year. The primary focus of this bold monthly publication is to explore black gay and lesbian urban culture in America from a conservative midwestern perspective. Over the past year this publication has challenged itself to explore the diversity of a lifestyle which receives little to no attention from popular mainstream or major gay and lesbian publications.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Ten Percent in the Million Man March

by Keith Boykin

"Black by Birth/Gay by God/Proud by Choice." Those were the words my trembling hands scribbled on the posterboard in the brisk morning air at a black gay rally a few hours before the Million Man March.

Hundreds of black gay men and a handful of lesbians joined me on that Monday in an historic openly gay contingent in the Million Man March, proudly representing the tens of thousands of black gay men who were there but could not be a part of our group. Our pre-march rally drew prominent speakers from around the country, including noted civil rights activist Derrick Bell, who is heterosexual, and the black, openly gay mayor of Cambridge, Kenneth Reeves.

Uncertain what lies ahead, we left our rally and quietly began the 30-minute procession to the Million Man March assembly on the Mall. A few passersby hurriedly moved out of the way, two people driving their cars along the adjoining streets honked their horns in support and a number of pedestrians on the other side of the street stopped and stared.

Sensing no negative reaction to our presence, our group grew increasingly ambitious and empowered. We began to chant: "We're Black! We're Gay! We wouldn't have it any other way!" Still no one in the crowed of people we approached reacted critically. The chant became louder and bolder: "Gay Men! (Woof). Of African Descent." As we marched into the multitude of people assembled on the blocked off streets, the crowd reaction seemed to change from curiosity to intimidation and the throngs of black men parted like the Red Sea in front of us.

A police officer on motorcycle idled alongside our group as if he anticipated a confrontation. But as we marched closer and closer to the rally stage, the crowd reaction grew increasingly and overwhelmingly positive, and even enthusiastic. Some raised their fists in solidarity, dozens whipped out their cameras and video equipment to take pictures, but only one of the thousands of people I saw did or said anything homophobic. Gesturing his

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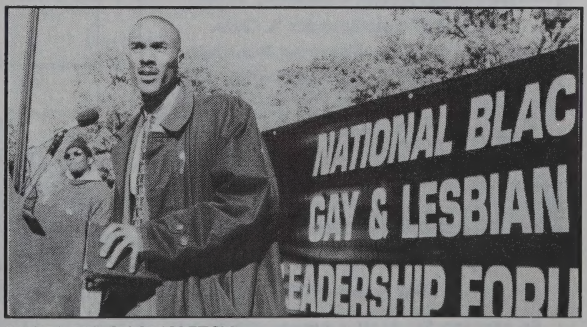

PHOTO BY RON SINGLETON

Keith Boykin, executive director of Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum at the Million Man March pre-rally.

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The Life and Work of Audre Lorde

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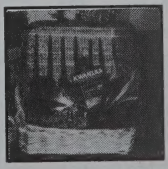

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thumbs downward, he yelled, "God didn't make no mistakes." One of our group shot back, "You're right!" We kept marching.

The lesson in this experience is that when we believe in ourselves enough to come out of the closet and be open about who we are as black gay men and lesbians, our community not only accepts us, they respect us more. For many march participants, that Monday was the first time they had ever seen black homosexuals openly, visibly and unabashedly acknowledging themselves as part of the black community. Given the opportunity to succumb to peer pressure prejudice, they took the high road and greeted our participation. They know that the battle for black liberation requires many soldiers, and in this army, at least, gays are welcome in the military.

What happened on the Mall that day was the beginning of the revolution in our thinking as black people and as black gay people. Black men loving black men is a revolutionary act. In a culture whose popular music and film glorify black-on-black violence, the simple act of loving our brothers as brothers becomes an act of rebellion against the fratricidal status quo.

Who is better suited to help black men learn the value of loving one another as brothers than black gay men, who have been loving one another as brothers for years? Who is better suited to demonstrate to black men how to care for and show affection for one another than black gay men, who have been caring for and showing affection towards one another when no one else would? And who is better suited to lead the long overdue revolution against patriarchy and violence against women than black gay men? Indeed, as Black Panther leader Huey Newton presciently observed in 1970, "a homosexual could be the most revolutionary" of the revolutionaries.

"It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being an African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population."

"That's beautiful," he said.

I saw the revolution in the faces of brothers who smiled at me, or the ones who shook my hand and greeted me at the march. One brother asked about the sticker I wore on my coat, a cutout of the African continent in the gay movement's rainbow colors. "What does that mean?" "It's an African rainbow," I explained, "it signifies my pride in being and African-American gay man and reflects the diversity of the African-American population." "That's beautiful," he said.

Despite the welcome extended by the march participants, the march organizers and speakers missed two crucial opportunities: first, to include an openly gay speaker, and, second, to teach black men how to save their lives. While AIDS is now the leading cause of death for black men between the ages of 25 and 44, the message of AIDS prevention was never discussed at the march. Unfortunately, this disease will continue to take a toll on our community so long as black people and our so-called leaders remain to afraid to address publicly issues of sex, sexuality and sexual orientation.

Nevertheless, I hope the presence of our openly gay contingent will help to begin the much needed dialogue on black sexuality and teach the march organizers what the vast majority of rank and file marchers already know: black gay men and lesbians are not a threat to black unity—they are the key to it.

Keith Boykin is Executive Director of the National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum and author of the forthcoming book, One More River to Cross: Black & Gay in America, to be published by Doubleday.

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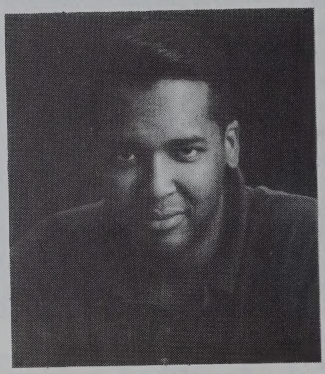

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Good Doctor, Good Patient

Three AIDS care experts have published Good Doctors, Good Patients: Partners in HIV Treatment to communicate the personal qualities, attitudes, and medical strategies that they have found to be associated with prolonged and healthier survival among people with HIV. Written for people with HIV, their caregivers and doctors, the book reflects the author's professional and personal experiences, including their AIDS long-term Survivor Study, which followed nearly 100 men and women with HIV and featured interviews with 25 leading AIDS specialists.

"Good Doctors, Good Patients provides important insights into critical issues involved in the relationship between a person with HIV and his or her health care provider." commented David M. Gold, former Executive Editor, Gay Men's Health Crisis' Treatment Issues. "It is useful for people with AIDS, their friends, family, caregivers, and especially health care providers and mental health professionals."

"The book is extremely helpful" says Venus Publisher Charlene Cothran, "It told exactly how to handle my feelings of helplessness during a friend's terminal illness."

Copies of Good Doctors, Good Patients may be obtained from NCM publishers for $4.50 for shipping and handling. Requests should be sent to NCM publishers at: NCM Publishers, Dept. JL; 200 Varick St.; New York, NY 10014. Those wishing to receive multiple copies should contact Judy Leong at (212) 691-9100.

The book itself is being provided free of charge as a service by Burroughs Wellcome Co. The company discovered, developed, and manufactures a wide range of therapies for the management of HIV disease, and continues to support a broad research program.

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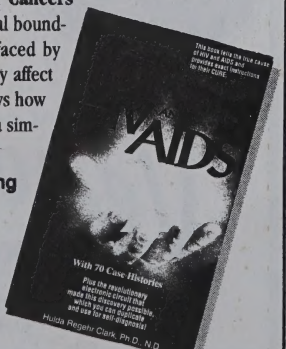

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Night Songs

by Penny Mickelbury, 1995, Naiad

Reviewed by A.J. Hines

Stabbing victims. All prostitutes. A low priority for the Washington, D.C. police Lieutenant Gianna Maglione, the head of the Hate Crimes Unit, feels the crimes have significance and are only the tip of an ugly iceberg. Plagues by homophobia and political patronage, Lt. Maglione forges ahead.

Meanwhile, Maglione's lover, African-American newspaper reporter, Mimi Patterson is combing the perilous streets in search of her missing informants. Lt. Maglione refuses to discuss her cases with her lover. Her stubbornness inadvertently put Mimi and their relationship in danger.

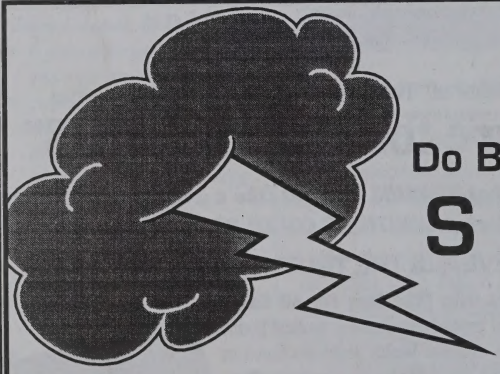
As an African-American writer, Mickelbury is able to address subjects that have traditionally been ignored in the lesbian mystery genre; racism and socio-economic class prejudice.

Night Songs is the second book in the series. Mickelbury's first, Keeping Secrets, pits the police Lt. against the newspaper reporter. They struggle with police procedure that are contrary to the public's right to know. The conflict becomes more complicated by strong sexual feelings.

Mickelbury has strong characters with distinct personalities and similar agendas. However, they have very different approaches which enhances the story and creates real romance.

PHOTOGRAPH BY D.E. HOUSTON

Author Penny Mickelbury



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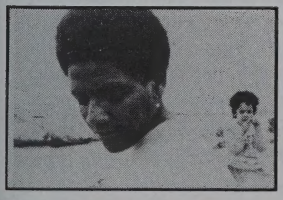
Miss Dot & Miss Lorde

By Doris L. Harris

On Nov. 17, 1992
10 days before her 50th birthday
my mother let go of the mosaic design
that was her life.
with its missing pieces, delicate thin lines
and healed over slashes,
Cancer hadn't won, she had simply taken her marbles
and moved on,
Same day, another sistuh,
a poet pure,
a lover of women, an explorer
began her own journey,
although they have taken different paths
I know, they'll meet along the way
introductions won't be necessary,
my mother will recognize Miss Lorde as the woman
who wrote all those books, her want to be a radical
call herself a feminist, must be going though a phase
just need a good man, lesbian daughter,
was always sending her, after one of their fights
and Miss Lorde will know Miss Dot very well,
seen her hiding between the lines of her poetry
a weary warrior, who despite her war stories
could never say, I want
I need,
who found out damn near too late
that battle scars, are not love,
they'll embrace
my mother will be the first to let go,
she'll walk away, fast
that's how she walked, talked, lived
Miss Lorde will be able to keep the pace, her legs are
much longer than a nine year old
who's asking for money, to buy a Easter dress,
and she's tougher, as tough as these times have been
for poor black women
and she's wise, wise enough to know that my mother
was running,
from something as unrecognizable as destiny,
with each step, Miss Lorde will see just how fragile
she really was, as fragile as a promise
made to a child



CONCERTS

Atlanta Minority Aids Council and GRP Recording Company Present

URBAN KNIGHTS

featuring Ramsey Lewis Art Porter, Omar Hakim, Victor Bailey Be 2, 8:00 PM at The Lincoln Theater, 1215 U Street, Washington, D.C. For ticket information call (202) 328 6000 or Ticketmaster at (202) 432-SEAT.

Shades of Life

a concert by Atlanta Feminist Women's Chorus, December 2, 1995 * 8:00 PM; $12 advance & $15 at door, $10 student, child, group. Call (770) 438-5823 for information. (Pictured: Chantel Wright, Asst. Director AFWC)

CONFERENCES

Eighth Annual Creating Change Conference sponsored by NGLTF in Detroit, MI, featuring Elias Farajafe-Jones and Urvashi Vaid, among others. Call (202) 332-6483, ext. 3209 for information.

Ninth Annual National Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership

Foundation Conference, Dallas Texas. February 15–19, 1996. Call (213) 964-7820 for more information.

EVENTS

Nov. 19th—WOOBABI Productions annual trip to

Atlantic City, New Jersey

For information, contact Bobbi & Babi Moore (301) 596-6167.

FILM

CLOSING NIGHT FEATURE - Thurs.November 2 at 8 PM Anthology Film Archive (AFA) 32 2nd Avenue @ 2nd Street

Black Nations/ Queer Nations?

directed by Shari Frilot. We are happy to present the World Premiere of this experimental documentary about the historic March 1995 conference which provided an international account of identity politics in black and queer community. Featured participants include South African activists Simon Nkoli & Zachie Achmat, Essex Hemphill, Isaac Julien, Coco Fusco, Kobena Mercer, and Barbara Smith. (Discussion & Closing Night Party to follow).

NO MORE Sweets for You

(Sun, 11/5, 6 PM, KF; Sat, 11/11, 7 PM, AFA) These new film and video shorts unfold the fantasies, trauma and schizophrenia of solo-ness. In an era of corporate grunge, queer modification, empowerment politics and right-wing cyborgs, how do the unassimilated survive without being smashed, named or forced to participate?—Elisabeth Subrin, Curator.

JUNGLI BOOGIE: Queer South Asian Film & Video (Fri, 11/3 PM 9 PM AFA; Sat, 11/11 9 PM KF) A collection of video

and film work by queer South Asian artists from around the world and around the corner. Includes new works by Hima B. and Prathiba Parmar. (And don't miss the after party thrown by SALGA, the South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association).—David Dasharath Kalal & Gita' Reddy, Curators.

On Thurs., November 16th, 1995 at 7:00 PM, The Atlanta African Film Society's 11th Annual Hoyt Fuller Festival Film, co-sponsored with Morris Brown College International Student Series, will premiere

CHOCOLATE CITY

a film that takes a realistic look at today's college life. CHOCOLATE CITY, a student-made, feature length film, shot on Florida A&M University campus, stresses the importance of making sound decisions in the nineties.. The film will premier at Morris Brown College, 643 Martin Luther King Drive, SW in Atlanta. For further information, please call the Atlanta African Film Society's Hot-line number (404) 818-6444. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members

Also, on Friday, 7 PM, November 17th at Georgia Pacific Auditorium, 133 Peachtree St in downtown Atlanta, The Hoyt Fuller Film Festival continues with NY filmmaker, Camille Billops, and James Hatch introducing their latest feature, the

KKK BOUTIQUE AIN'T JUST REDNECKS

It's a film that examines the issues of racism in America. $5/$4 for Atlanta African Film Society members.

Black and White Men Together/Atlanta (BWMT) will

celebrate it's fourteenth anniversary with a weekend of activities November 22–26. Featured activities include: the final film by Marlon Riggs, "Black Is/Black Ain't" and many more activities (see 411 in this issue for details.)

GALLERY OPENINGS

November 10–30: The Recent Works of Michael Morgan, Didier Cameau, Quashelle Curtis, William Downs, III, and

Kemba Sewer. The five African Americans cover the entire spectrum of art. Michael and Quashelle are painters. Their pieces are brightly colored and instantly appealing. Didier is the sculptor in the group, working mostly in metal, and uses the figure as a starting point for his more abstract compositions. William works both in printmaking and drawing, very figurative and stylized. Finally, Kemba has chosen the computer as her tool. Her images are very personal and deal with her childhood, growing up black in America. Artists' reception Friday, November 10, 7:00–9:00 p.m.

MEETING

Black Gay Pride Atlanta '96

Community Wide Meeting will be held at Karats, Monday, Nov. 20, 7:00 PM. All are welcome.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Blue Jeans/ Black Tie

New Year's Eve Affair by Green Eyes Production. Sunday, December 31, 1995. $20. 10 PM–3 AM. Baltimore. 997-9443.

CELEBRATE KWANZAA

with Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church with a Kwanzaa Celebration for Brothers and Sisters in the Life. Featuring Drummers, Dancers, Cultural Presentations and a Pot Luck Meal. 2:30 PM. Virginia-Highland Baptist Church, 743 Virginia Ave., NE, Atlanta. 404/388-4624. Bring your favorite covered dish.

Fourth Annual

Sparkle Nite

"Pre" New Years Eve Blow out, NY Hosted by Rachel & Co. (718) 842-2929.

E.U.N.I.C.E. presents a

Silk & Satin New Year's Eve Weekend

at the Fabulous Valley Forge Sheraton Hotel, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA. Weekend package features three days/two nights hotel accommodations. All inclusive special rate of $149 per person/double occupancy valid until Nov. 6, 1995. Ask for Dazzle Production Rates. For more information call 215-242-4255.

Simplicity Attractions Unlimited of New York

GALA

10:00 PM - 3:00 AM Bronx, New York; Open Bar, Buffet, Champagne, $50.00 per person. Bess Knowings 718-992-9073.

VENUS MAGAZINE's 1st Anniversary. Celebration. January 13–16. Watch for Details Next Issue.

Venus™
MAGAZINE
FOR LESBIANS AND GAYS OF COLOR

PARTIES

November 10...

FIESTA!

Getting Older Latin Style by Cha-Cha Productions. 11 PM–4 AM. Revolutions, Atlanta. (404) 621-5743.

Dec. 9th—Gloria Wells & Associates Annual Holiday

House Party

at the Days Inn, Washington, D.C., TIME: 10-3:00 AM Tickets $12 in advance & $15 at the door. For information, please contact (301) 596-6167.

Dec. 10th—NEFERTITI PRODUCTIONS present

A Holidy Extrabaganza

at Club Bunns, 608 W. Lexington St., Baltimore, MD TIME: 4-9 PM for information, contact Bobbi Moore at (301) 596-6167 or Winnie at (202) 484-0550.

READINGS

A poetry reading for the upcoming anthology

COLORS OF EXPRESSION

To be held at A Room of Our Own Bookstore (444 9th Street, Brooklyn) November 7 at 7 P.M. Submissions still being accepted for this unique, creative work of men and women of color who are living with AIDS. The theme for works of poetry, prose and art slated to appear is "Living Our Lives Day to Day." For more information about submitting work, please call (718) 499-6937.

THEATER

The Atlanta Ballet presents

Planet Dance

Guest Artists: Albert Evans and Wendy Whelan, NY City Ballet; For tickets call (404) 875-9081.

December 7–9, and 14–16—Comfort Zone Productions presents

The Best of Love Letters

by Kimbley Gilchrist and

PIPE DREAMS

and

The Christian and the Jewess

by Ira L. Jeffries, Starring Cheryl L. McClendon and Judi Smith. A series of one-act plays exploring various issues including women and AIDS, opposing viewpoints on religion and sexuality, women and war, drugs and rekindling old flames. Shows at Amuse America, 599 Broadway at Houston. Tickets: $12 in advance, $15 at the door. For information and reservations, call 212-726-1322 or 718-802-9037.

November 22 —December 10—7 Stages Theatre, in Little Five Points, 1105 Euclid Ave. presents

RIFFS

by Bill Harris. A special show to benefit AIDS Education/Services for Minorities will be held Sunday, Dec. 10. Call (404) 753-2900 for tickets/information this showing only.

A hilarious and charming story of four older African-American men who meet daily to read the newspaper, lie, and signify. In a play that combines humor, history, and hope, the retired men of the North End Preservation Association tell stories that reveal the importance and the richness of the African-American experience in the 20th Century. For tickets (404) 522-0911.

November 17–November 19—

EL CIMARRON

at 7 Stages Theatre features baritone Andre Solomon-Glover in the compelling story of Esteban Montejo, who was born a Cuban slave and escaped to his freedom. Tickets, call (404) 522-0911.

The Whole World Theatre presents

Improv Comedy

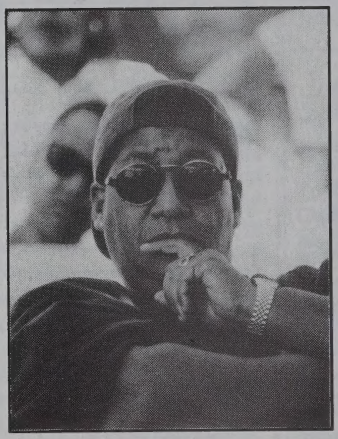
every Thursday night in our groovy, couch and easy chair "in your living room" environment. Guaranteed to be risky, risque and right up your alley if you liked Pulp Fiction. 9 PM. 1214 Spring Street, Atlanta. $5. Call 817-PLAY for reservations.

The Whole World Theatre presents

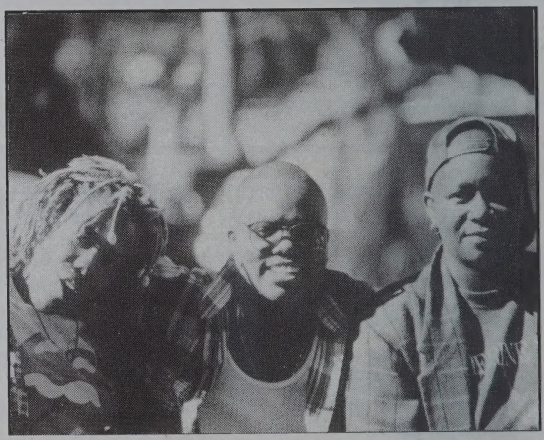
Pimps, Queens, & Dope Fiends Christmas Special

every Friday and Saturday night beginning November 10 through December 23. It's a sexy X-Mas filled with merriment... and miracles. 9 PM 1214 Spring Street. $10. Call 817-PLAY for reservations.

OUT & about



Writer Margret Sloan-Hunter, author of Black & Lavendar, *at Uloah Sister Fest.*

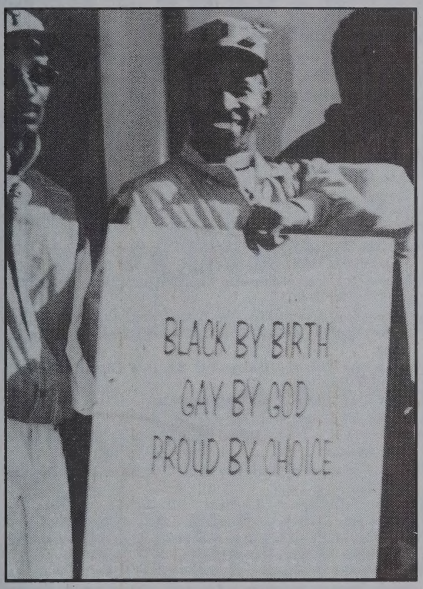


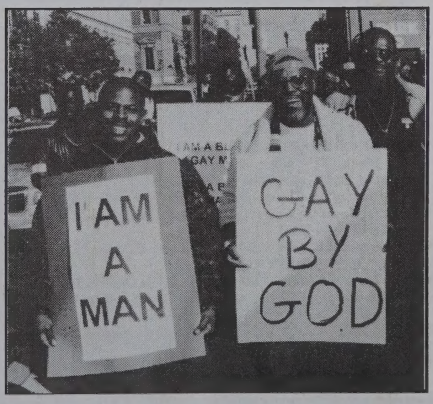
(Left to Right) Jeanine Woodson, Glinda Smith, and Sharon Noble (author of Lesbian Bedtime Stories), all from California.

Michael-Tone Covington, Tony Daniels and Tre Johnson (l–r) at the Venus headquarters during a poetry-reading fundraiser.

Linda Harrison, GA State Univ. Law Professor, and her partner, Joan Garner, executive director of The Fund for Southern Communities, during the Stonewall Bar Assoc.'s 1st Annual Awards Banquet last month

1,000,000 African-American Men Marching on D.C. × 10% =





ALL PHOTOGRAPHY THIS PAGE BY RON SINGLETON

ORGANIZATIONS

Send us your info! Additions, deletions, corrections, or expansions may be faxed to: (404) 622-8089 or mail to Venus Magazine, P.O. Box 89238, Atlanta, Georgia 30312.

Abundant Grace Community Church—743 Virginia Ave., Sunday worship–7:30 PM. (404) 815-0036.

ADODI New York—A self-supporting organization of gay and bisexual men of African Heritage. 432 West 43rd St, Ste. 8045, N.Y., N.Y. 10036

African Ancestral Lesbian United for Societal Changed (Formerly Salsa Soul)—(212) 620-7310. Candice.

African American Lesbian Gay Alliance (AALGA)—(404) 908-7371.

AIDS Education Services for Minorities (AESM)—P.O. Box 87277, Atlanta, GA 30337. (404) 753-2900 or (404) 743-7733.

AIDS Response Knoxville—Suite 411, 109 Northshore Drive, Knoxville, TN 37919, (615) 450-2437.

AIDS Services in Asian Communities, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 212, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1938

All Saints Metropolitan Community Church—575 Boulevard. Sunday, 7 PM, evenings, 8:30 PM, (404) 622-1154.

Atlanta Lambda Center, Inc.—P.O. Box 15180, Atlanta, Georgia 30333. (404) 662-9010.

A. Lorde Collective—African-American Lesbians Organized to Renew Dignity and Empowerment. Hotline: (313) 862-3396.

AYA Institute—dedicated to the education and mental health of our community. P.O. Box 3824, Jersey City, N.J. 07303-3824 or (201) 451-3412.

Bisexual Womyn of Colour—BIWOC since 1991. P.O. Box 020136, Brooklyn, NY 11202-136. (212) 479-7886. Donna Reddy, pres.

Black Lesbian and Gay Pride, Inc. (BLGP Inc.)—Box 7184, Washington, DC. 20024.

Black Gay and Lesbian Leadership Forum—1219 S. LaBrea Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019. (213) 964-7820. FAX (213) 964-7830.

Black and White Men Together—P.O. Box 1334, Atlanta, GA 30301-1334. (404) 892-BWMT.

Black Lesbians with Children—Erica Forbes 286-0842

Black Women's Network—Box 5, 136 Kingsland Height St., London, England, UK/E8/2NS

Black Women's Xchange (BWX)—Meets every Friday at 8 PM at the Amassi Center. 3419 Martin Luther King Jr. Way, Oakland, CA. For more info, call Ms. Clydis (510) 649-0536.

Boyz of Distinction—P.O. Box 78091, Atl., GA 30532.

Brothers Back-2-Back, Inc.—An African American HIV/AIDS Organization, P.O. Box 11366, Atlanta, GA 30310. Voice: (404) 593-5805.

Chicago Coalition of Black Lesbians & Gays—(312) 871-2117.

Creation Woman—poets/artists and affiliates meet last Sunday in the month. (310) 422-1970.

D.C. Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gay Men and Bisexuals—(202) 388-8078.

Dyfferent Gyrl Production—P.O. Box 13346, Atlanta, GA 30324. (404) 908-5340.

Friend of Friends—(301) 735-5023; P.O. Box 77075, Washington, D.C. 20013

GALAEI (for Latino gay men), 1233 Locust St., 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 985-3382

Gay and Out Productions—P.O. Box 111, Clarkston, GA 30021-0111. (404) 299-7809 FX: (404) 508-8697.

Gay Black Female (GBF)—6312 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 114, Hollywood, CA 90028. (310) 288-6315.

The Gay and Lesbian Center—208 W. 13th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011.

Gay/Lesbian Latino/a Comm. Organization. Out Reach, Inc.—(404) 346-3922 or (800) 441-2437.

Gay, Lesbian and Straight Teacher's Network—P.O. Box 5512, Atlatna, Georgia 31107. (404) 872-4320.

Greater Atlanta Business Coalition (GABC or Gay Buck)—2103 N. Decatur Rd., Suite 190, Decatur, GA 30033. PH: (404) 377-4258 FX: (404) 377-8500. EM: info@gabc.gaypride.com

Home Free Ministry—P.O. Box 688, Atl., GA 30301. (404) 818-2033.

Hospitality Atlanta—(404) 627-1630.

International Black Writers & Artists—meet 2nd Sunday Bladwin Hills/Crenshaw (213) 964-3721.

Lambda Car Club/Dogwood Region—(404) 901-9447, P.O. Box 11705, Atlanta, GA 30355.

Las Buenas Amigas—(212) 868-7816. Carmen, The Gay & Lesbian Center, 208 W. 13th St., NY, NY 10011.

Latinos En Accion—Youth support group. P.O. Box 15388, Atlanta, GA 30325. (404) 621-5743. Yolanda Leeky, (404) 753-2840.

Lesbians Latinos en Nuestro Ambiente—(707) 292-7705.

LLEGO, National Latino/a Lesbian & Gay Organization—P.O. Box 44483, Wash., DC. 20026.

Malebox—Meeting black men. P.O. Box 75392, Wash., D.C. 20013.

Minority AIDS Project of Philly and Vicinity, 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 218, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1937

MOCAA (Men of Color Against AIDS)—Boston, MA. (617) 442-3800

National Assoc. of Black & White Men Together—1747 Connecticut Ave., Washington, DC. 20020. (202) 462-3599.

National Black Women's Health Project—1237 Gordon, Street S.W., Atlanta, GA (404) 758-9590.

Night of the Black Independents—A film production society. 830-A Eastwood Ave., Atl., GA 30316. (404) 627-9900.

Our Cousin's House—An African American AIDS Organization. 1023 Dill Avenue, Atlanta, GA 30310. (404) 756-9202.

Positive Black Lesbians United (PBLU)—P.O. Box 655, Avondale Estates, GA 30002. (404) 250-7950.

Project Open Hand, Atlanta—(404) 525-4620. Home delivered meals for people with AIDS related illness.

Project AZUKA, Inc.—An AIDS organization for women. P.O. Box 9173, Savannah, GA 31402. (912) 233-6733.

Redefined Faith Unity Fellowship Church—Box 50047, Atlanta, GA 30302. (404) 388-4624.

SALGA—South Asian Lesbian Gay Association; P.O. Box 50, Cooper Station, NY, NY 10276-0050; (212) 294-2550; Email: salganyc@dorsai.org

Second Sunday Discussion Group—P.O. Box 1574, Decatur, GA 30031. (404) 629-0583.

Sisters of 30 Something Special—(404) 997-6240.

Sister Love, Inc.—(404) 753-7733, (404) 753-1500.

Sophisticated Ladies—Lesbian Social Group for Mature Women of Color. (202) 788-1866.

Southern Conference of Black Gay Men—P.O. Box 212421, Columbia S.C. 29221

Spelman College Lesbian Bi-Sexual Alliance—710 Peachtree St., Suite 126, Atlanta, GA 30308. (404) 908-5368.

The ADODI MUSE—a black gay male literary group; 348 Berean Ave. S.E., Atlanta, Ga 30312. (404) 521-2515.

The COLOURS Organization, Inc.—201 S. 12th., Ste. 1R, Phila. PA 19107. Education, prevention and support programs for sexual minority people of color. For more information, please contact (215) 627-6233.

The Men's Gathering—P.O. Box 190869, Dallas, Texas 75219-0869,(214) 521-5342, ext. 876. Meeting times: 4th Friday of each month, 7 pm

TRIKONE—An Asian gay and lesbian organization. trikatl@mindspring.com

ULOAH (United Lesbians of African Heritage)—1626 N. Wilcox Ave., #190, L.A., CA 90028. (213) 960-5051.

Unity, Inc. (for African American gay men), 1207 Chestnut St., Suite 214, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 851-1876

Viva!—Lesbian and Gay Latino Arts Organization. (310) 301-8035.

Women in the Life—D.C.'s Black Lesb. party hotline. (202) 667-8078.

Women of Color Breast Cancer Survivors Support Project—8610 S. Sepulveda Blvd, Ste 200, L.A., CA 90045 (310) 216-3200.

WRFG Radio,
Gay Graffiti with Deborah Paget—Thursdays, 7–8 PM.
Crossroads with Baldelie Jones—3rd Thursday, 7–8 PM.
Sister Love, Sister's Time—6 PM Thursdays
"Alternative Talk"—2nd/4th Fridays, 6PM.

Yahimba, Lesbians of African Descent—1012 1/2 Dodge, Evanston, IL 60202 or (708) 328-7715

YouthPride—(404) 815-9965,Teen Support Group (13-18: Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:00; Young Adult Personal Growth Group (18-24 yo): Wednesday evenings 8:30-10:00.

ZAMI—Atlanta's premiere African American lesbian organization meets 2nd and 4th Sundays from 6:30 until 8:30 PM. Call (404) 370-1392.

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